THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D

VOL. VI.



BOSWELL'S LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.



THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

INCLUDING

A JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES;

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

NEW EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND NOTES,

BY

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER, M.P.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUMES OF JOHNSONIANA,

BY HAWKINS, PIOZZI, MURPHY, TYERS, REYNOLDS, MALONE, NICHOLS, STEEVENS, CUMBERLAND, AND OTHERS.

AND NOTES BY VARIOUS HANDS.

ALSO, UPWARDS OF

FIFTY ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

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THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

1775.

Excursion into France. — Paris. — Benedictine Monks. — Choisi. — Palais-Royal. — Mrs. Fermor. — Palais-Bourbon. — Fontainebleau. — Versailles. — Trianon. — Santerre, the Brewer. — King's Library — Sorbonne. — St. Cloud. — Sève. — Bellevue. — Meudon. — Grand-Chartreux. — Luxembourg. — Friar Wilkes. — St. Denis. — Chantilly. — Compeigne. — Cambray. — State of Society in France. — Madame de Boufflers. — Voltaire. — Dr. Burney's Collectanea. — Letters to Mrs. Montagu, &c.

It is to be regretted, that Johnson did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that "he could write the life of a broomstick (1)," so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every subject for remark in that great kingdom, his

(1) It is probable that the author's memory here deceived him, and that he was thinking of Stella's remark, that *Swift* could write finely upon a broomstick. — J. Boswell, jun.

[illegible] observation, and peculiar vigour of [illegible] illustration, would have produced a [illegible] work. During his visit to it, which lasted [illegible]t two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to show me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them has been lost, or perhaps destroyed in a precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented: one small paper book, however, entitled "France II.," has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shows an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection.

"*Tuesday, Oct.* 10. — We saw the *école militaire*, in which 150 young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age —flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine except the council-room — The French have large squares in the windows. They make good iron palisades (1) — Their meals are gross. (2)

(1) Alluding, probably, to the fine *grilles* so frequent in France. He had, probably, just seen that of the *Hôtel des Invalides*, which is one of the finest. — C.

(2) The contrary has been the general opinion; and Johnson was certainly a bad judge in that point, if he believed that his own taste was delicate. — C.

"We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron — The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet — Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms. — We walked to a small convent of the fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay the Lives of the Saints.

"*Wednesday, Oct.* 11. — We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

"Thence we went to Mr. Monvil's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance — Porphyry.

"Thence we went to St. Roque's church, which is very large. The lower part of the pillars incrusted with marble. Three chapels behind the high altar; the last a mass of low arches. Altars, I believe, all round.

"We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover-square. Inhabited by the high families. Louis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

"Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of *Chatlois* is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe.

"We dined with Bocage (1), the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady — The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear — Mr. Le Roy, Count Manucci, the abbé, the prior (2), and Father Wilson, who stayed with me till I took him home in the coach — Bathiani is gone.

"The French have no laws for the maintenance of

(1) Madame Du Bocage. See *post*, p. 22. — C.

(2) [The then Prior of the English Benedictines at Paris was named Cowley. — MARKLAND.]

their poor — Monk not necessarily a priest — Benedictines rise at four; are at church an hour and half; at church again half an hour before, half an hour after, dinner; and again from half an hour after seven to eight — They may sleep eight hours — Bodily labour wanted in monasteries — The poor taken into hospitals, and miserably kept — Monks in the convent fifteen: accounted poor.

"*Thursday, Oct.* 12. — We went to the Gobelins — Tapestry makes a good picture — imitates flesh exactly — one piece with a gold ground — the birds not exactly coloured — Thence we went to the king's cabinet; very neat, not, perhaps, perfect — gold ore — candles of the candle-tree — seeds — woods — Thence to Gagnier's (1) house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never had seen before — vases — pictures — the dragon china — The lustre is said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3,500*l.* — The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000*l.* — Damask hangings covered with pictures — Porphyry — This house struck me — Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's — Captain Irwin with us (2) — 'Spain — 'County towns all beggars — At Dijon he could not find 'the way to Orleans — Cross roads of France very bad '— Five soldiers — Woman — Soldiers escaped — The 'colonel would not lose five men for the death of one 'woman — The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by 'the colonel's permission — Good inn at Nismes — Moors 'of Barbary fond of Englishmen — Gibraltar eminently 'healthy; it has beef from Barbary — There is a large 'garden — Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.'

"*Friday, Oct.* 13. — I stayed at home all day, only

(1) Perhaps Gagny, Intendant des Finances, who had a fine house in the Rue de Varennes. — C.

(2) The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin. — B. — And is therefore marked as quotation. — C.

went to find the prior, who was not at home — I read something in Canus (1) — *Nec admiror, nec multum laudo.*

"*Saturday, Oct. 14.* — We went to the house of M. [D'] Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold — The ladies' closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper — They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms.

"Then we went to Julien's (2), the treasurer of the clergy — 30,000*l.* a year — The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold — Books of wood here, and in another library.

"At D********'s (3) I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and in contempt showed them to Mr. T[hrale] — 'Prince Titi (4); Bibl. des Fées,' and other

(1) Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise "De Locis Theologicis," in twelve books. — B. — He was celebrated for the beauty of his Latinity. "Melchior Canus parlait Latin comme Ciceron." — Vigneul-Marvilliana, vol. i. p. 161. — C.

(2) M. de St. Julien, Receveur-général du Clergé. — C.

(3) D'Argenson's. — C.

(4) The History of *Prince Titi* was said to be the *autobiography* of Frederick Prince of Wales, but was probably written by Ralph, his secretary. See Park's Roy. and Nob. Auth., vol. i. p. 171.; and Biog. Dict., art. Ralph, where it is added, that Ralph's executor gave up the unpublished MS. of Prince Titi to Lord Bute. — C. — [It is possible that the original MS. was so given up, but the book had been undoubtedly printed, both in French and English — in Paris in 1735, and in London 1736. The work was probably exhibited purposely on the lady's table, in the expectation that her English visitors would think it a literary curiosity; which, indeed, it has proved to be; for Dr. Johnson seems not to have known what it was, and some modern critics have even denied the very existence of the volume; which, however, I have had in my possession. It was advertised in the Gent. Mag. for Feb. 1736, as "History of Prince Titi, a Royal Allegory, translated from the original, just published in Paris: By the Hon. Mrs. Stanly; sold by E. Curl; price 3s." — C. 1835.]

books — She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

"Then we went to Julien le Roy, the king's watchmaker, a man of character in his business, who showed a small clock made to find the longitude. A decent man.

"Afterwards we saw the *Palais Marchand* (1) and the courts of justice, civil and criminal — Queries on the *Sellette* (2) — This building has the old Gothic passages, and a great appearance of antiquity. Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

"Much disturbed; hope no ill will be. (3)

"In the afternoon I visited Mr. Freron the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me. His house not splendid, but of commodious size. His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated, but decent. I was pleased with my reception. He is to translate my books, which I am to send him with notes.

"*Sunday, Oct.* 15. — At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m. from Paris The terrace noble along the river. The rooms numerous and

(1) It was not quite correct to apply the name of *Palais Marchand* to the whole of that vast building called generally the *Palais*, which from being the old *palace* of the kings of France had (like our own palace of Westminster) become appropriated to the sittings of the parliament and the courts of justice; and the *Conciergerie* of that palace (like the *Gate-house* of ours) became a prison. The *Palais Marchand* was properly only the stalls (like what are now called *bazaars*) which were placed along some of the galleries and corridors of the *Palais*. — C.

(2) The *sellette* was a stool on which the criminal sat while he was interrogated by the court. This is what Johnson means by "queries." — C.

(3) This passage, which so many think superstitious, reminds me of "Archbishop Laud's Diary." — B. — It, perhaps, had no superstitious meaning. He felt, it would seem, his mind disturbed, and may naturally have been apprehensive of becoming worse. — C.

grand, but not discriminated from other palaces. The chapel beautiful, but small — China globes — inlaid tables — labyrinth — sinking table (1) — toilet tables.

"*Monday, Oct.* 16. — The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty — A very great collection of pictures — three of Raphael — two Holy Family — one small piece of M. Angelo — one room of Rubens — I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

"The Thuilleries — Statues: Venus — Æn. and Anchises in his arms — Nilus — many more — The walks not open to mean persons — Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece — Pont tournant. (2)

"Austin Nuns (3) Grate — Mrs. Fermor, abbess — She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable — Mrs. —— has many books — has seen life — Their frontlet disagreeable — Their hood — Their life easy — Rise about five; hour and half in chapel — Dine at ten — Another hour and half in chapel; half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven — four hours in chapel — A large garden — Thirteen pensioners (4) — Teachers complained.

"At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there — Rope-dancing and farce — Egg dance — *N. B.* Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

(1) A round table, the centre of which descended by machinery to a lower floor; so that supper might be served and removed without the presence of servants. It was invented by Louis XV. during the favour of Madame du Barri. — C.

(2) Before the revolution, the passage from the garden of the Thuilleries into the *Place Louis XV.* was over a *pont tournant*, a kind of drawbridge. — C.

(3) The English convent of *Notre Dame de Sion*, of the order of St. Augustine, situated in the Rue des Fossés St. Victor. — C.

(4) Young ladies, who paid for their education. Before the revolution, there were no boarding schools, and all young ladies were educated in the convents. — C.

"*Tuesday, Oct.* 17. — At the *Palais Marchand* I bought —

A snuff box	-	24 *livres.*
————	-	6
Table book	-	15
Scissors 3 p [pair]	-	18

[*Livres*] 63 — 2*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* sterling.

"We heard the lawyers plead — *N.* As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year — *Chambre de question* (1) — Tournelle at the Palais Marchand (2) — An old venerable building.

"The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé — Only one small wing shown — lofty — splendid — gold and glass — The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms — The present prince a grandsire at thirty-nine. (3)

"The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them — As I entered, my wife was in my mind (4); she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

"*N.B.* In France there is no middle rank. (5)

(1) This was one of the rooms of the *Conciergerie*, where *la question* — torture — was applied. — C.

(2) The word *Tournelle* designated that portion of the parliament of Paris which tried criminal causes, and that part of the *Palais* in which they sat. — C.

(3) The *grandson* was the celebrated and unfortunate Duké d'Enghien, born in 1775, murdered in 1804. The father, "restes infortunés du plus beau sang du monde," still lives under his former title of Duc de Bourbon. — C. 1830. — *He* died in Aug. 1830, under most melancholy circumstances. — C. 1835.

(4) His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his "Prayers and Meditations," appears very feelingly in this passage.

(5) This observation, which Johnson afterwards repeats, was unfounded in the sense in which he appears to have understood it. France was, *in theory*, divided (as England is) into the

"So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris — The palaces of Louvre and Thuilleries granted out in lodgings.

"In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

"The French beds commended — Much of the marble only paste.

"The colosseum (1) a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

"*Wednesday, Oct.* 18. — We went to Fontainebleau which we found a large mean town, crowded with people — The forest thick with woods, very extensive — Manucci secured us lodgings — The appearance of the country pleasant — no hills, few streams, only one hedge — I

clergy, the *nobles*, and the *commons*, and so it might be said that there was no middle rank; but not only did the theoretical constitution of society thus resemble that of England, but so did its practical details. There were first the *peers* of France, who had seats and voices in the parliament, but were of little weight as a political body, from the smallness of their numbers, and because their *parliament* had only continued to be, what we still call ours, a *high court*, and had lost its *legislative* functions; — next came the *noblesse* — the *gentilhommes* — answering to our *gentry*; then the middle classes of society, composed of the poorer gentry, lawyers, medical men, inferior clergy, literary men, merchants, artists, manufacturers, notaries, shopkeepers, in short, all those who in every country constitute the *middle classes*, and they undoubtedly existed in France in their due proportion to the gentry on one hand, and the working classes on the other. Johnson's remark is the stranger, because it would seem that his intercourse while in Paris was almost exclusively with persons of this *middle class*; but it must be observed, that his intercourse and his consequent sources of information were not extensive. Mrs. Piozzi says to him, talking of the progress of refinement of manners in England, "I much wonder whether this refinement has spread all over the continent, or whether it is confined to our own island: when *we were in France we could form little judgment, as our time was chiefly passed among the English.*" — C.

(1) This building, which stood in the Faubourg St. Honoré, was a kind of Ranelagh, and was destroyed a few years after. — C.

remember no chapels nor crosses on the road — Pavement still, and rows of trees.

"*N. B.* Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

"*Thursday, Oct.* 19. — At court we saw the apartments — The king's bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid — Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes — servants and masters — Brunet (1) with us the second time.

"The introductor came to us — civil to me — Presenting — I had scruples (2) — Not necessary — We went and saw the king and queen at dinner — We saw the other ladies at dinner — Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené — At night we went to a comedy — I neither saw nor heard — Drunken women — Mrs. T. preferred one to the other.

"*Friday, Oct.* 20. — We saw the queen mount in the forest — Brown habit; rode aside: one lady rode aside (3) — The queen's horse light gray — martingale — She galloped — We then went to the apartments, and admired them — Then wandered through the palace — In the passages, stalls and shops — Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out — We saw the king's horses and dogs — The dogs almost all English — degenerate — The

(1) Perhaps M. J. L. Brunet, a celebrated advocate. — C.

(2) It was the custom previous to court presentations, that an officer waited on the persons to be introduced, to instruct them in the forms. Johnson's scruples probably arose from this — it was an etiquette generally insisted on to present at foreign courts those only who had been presented to their own sovereign at home. Johnson had never been publicly presented to George III., though he had had that honour in private, and may, therefore, have entertained scruples whether he was entitled to be presented to the King of France; but it would seem that those scruples were not necessary, the rule perhaps extending only to *formal presentations* at court, and not to admission to see the king dine. — C.

(3) This probably means that the queen was attended by only one lady, who also rode aside; and *not* that one female attendant rode so, while other ladies rode astride. — C.

horses not much commended — The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

"At night the ladies went to the opera — I refused, but should have been welcome.

"The king fed himself with his left hand as we.

"*Saturday, Oct.* 21. — In the night I got round — We came home to Paris — I think we did not see the chapel — Tree broken by the wind — The French chairs made all of boards painted. (1)

"*N.B.* Soldiers at the court of justice (2) — Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates — Dijon women. (3)

"Fagots in the palace — Every thing slovenly, except in the chief rooms — Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

"Women's saddles seem ill made — Queen's bridle woven with silver — Tags to strike the horse.

"*Sunday, Oct.* 22. — To Versailles, a mean (4) town — Carriages of business passing — Mean shops against the wall — Our way lay through Sêve, where the China manufacture — Wooden bridge at Sêve, in the way to Versailles — The palace of great extent — The front long; I saw it not perfectly — The Menagerie — Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame — Halcyons, or gulls — Stag and hind, young — Aviary, very large; the net, wire — Black stag of China, small — Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches across; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal, though young;

(1) Meaning, no doubt, that they were not of cedar, ebony, or mahogany, but of some meaner wood coloured over, a fashion which had not yet reached England. — C.

(2) The *marechaussée* was posted at the gates of the courts of justice; but the interior discipline was maintained by *huissiers*, ushers, the servants of the court. — C.

(3) See *antè*, p. 4.

(4) There must be some mistake. Versailles is a remarkably stately town. — C.

as big, perhaps, as four oxen — The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing — The brown bear put out his paws — all very tame — The lion — The tigers I did not well view — The camel, or dromedary, with two bunches called the Huguin (1), taller than any horse — Two camels with one bunch — Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish — his feet well webbed; he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sideways — he caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

"Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles — It has an open portico; the pavement, and, I think, the pillars, of marble — There are many rooms, which I do not distinctly remember — A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis XIV. by the Venetian state — In the council-room almost all that was not door or window was, I think, looking-glass — Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house — The upper floor paved with brick (2) — Little Vienne — The court is ill paved — The rooms at the top are small, fit to soothe the imagination with privacy — In the front of Versailles are small basins of water on the terrace, and other basins, I think, below them — There are little courts — The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrors not very large, but joined by frames — I suppose the large plates were not yet made — The playhouse was very large (3) — The chapel

(1) This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.

(2) The upper floors of most houses in France are tiled. — C.

(3) That magnificent building, which was both a theatre and a ball-room. It was rarely used; the lighting and other expenses for a single night being 100,000 francs. It is celebrated in the History of the Revolution as the scene of the entertainment given by the Gardes du Corps on the 1st of October, 1789; of which innocent and, indeed, laudable testimony of attachment between them and their unhappy sovereigns, the rebels, by misrepresentations and calumnies, made so serious an affair. — C. — [When at Versailles the people showed us the theatre.

I do not remember if we saw — We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon — The foreign office paved with bricks [tiles] — The dinner half a louis each, and, I think, a louis over* — Money given at menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

"*Monday, Oct.* 23. — Last night I wrote to Levet — We went to see the looking-glasses wrought — They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick — At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate upon another with grit between them — The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn — The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions — The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told — Those that are to be polished are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal: they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand — The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aquafortis; they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs — They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre — The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver — To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites — Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high — Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slided till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it — It is then,

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As we stood on the stage, looking at some machinery for play-house purposes — 'Now we are here, what shall we act, Dr. Johnson? The Englishman at Paris?' — 'No, no,' replied he, 'we will try to act Harry the Fifth.' — Piozzi.]

I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury: the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

"In the way I saw the Grêve, the mayor's house (1), and the Bastile. We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer(2) — He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer — Beer is sold retail at sixpence a bottle — He brews 4,000 barrels a year — There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he — Reckoning them at 3,000 each, they make 51,000 a year — They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

"The moat of the Bastile is dry.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 24* — We visited the king's library — I saw the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black; part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut in boards. The Bible, supposed to be older that that of Mentz, in 1462; it has no date; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types — I am in doubt; the print is large and fair, in two folios — Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types — I think *Durandi Sanctuarium* in 1458 — This is inferred from the difference of form sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons — The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal — I saw nothing but the *Speculum*, which I had not seen, I think, before.

"Thence to the Sorbonne — The library very large, not in lattices like the king's — *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*, many

(1) The Hôtel de Ville. — C.

(2) Santerre, the detestable ruffian who afterwards conducted Louis XVI. to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it during his murder. — M.

folios — *Histoire Généalogique of France*, 9 vol. — *Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to. the last, f. 12 vol. — The prior and librarian dined with us — I waited on them home — Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students — The doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal — choose those who succeed to vacancies — Profit little.

"*Wednesday, Oct. 25.* — I went with the prior to St. Cloud, to see Dr. Hooke (1) — We walked round the palace, and had some talk — I dined with our whole company at the monastery — In the library, *Beroald* — *Cymon* — *Titus*, from Boccace — *Oratio Proverbialis* to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys — Dryden's Preface to the third vol. of Miscellanies. (2)

"*Thursday, Oct. 26.* — We saw the china at Sêve, cut, glazed, painted — Bellevue (3), a pleasing house, not great: fine prospect — Meudon, an old palace — Alexander, in porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks — Plato and Aristotle — Noble terrace overlooks the town. — St. Cloud — Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing — In the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine — Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded — Gough and Keene — Hooke came to us at the inn — A message from Drumgould.

"*Friday, Oct. 27.* — I staid at home — Gough and Keene, and Mrs. S——'s (4) friend dined with us — This day we began to have a fire — The weather is

(1) Second son of Hooke, the historian, a doctor of the Sorbonne. — C.

(2) He means, I suppose, that he read these different pieces while he remained in the library.

(3) At that period inhabited by the king's aunts. — C.

(4) Mrs. Strickland, the sister of Mr. Charles Townley, who happened to meet the party at Dieppe, and accompanied them to Paris. She introduced them to Madame du Bocage. — *Reynolds's Recollections.* — C.

grown very cold, and, I fear, has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"*Saturday, Oct.* 28. — I visited the Grand Chartreux (1), built by St. Louis — It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more — The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment — Mr. Baretti says four rooms; I remember but three — His books seemed to be French — His garden was neat; he gave me grapes — We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the king, and the captive nations.

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut — We climbed to the top stairs — I dined with Colebrooke (2), who had much company — Foote, Sir George Rodney (3), Motteux, Udson, Taaf — Called on the prior, and found him in bed.

"Hotel — a guinea a day — Coach, three guineas a week — Valet de place, three l. a day — *Avantcoureur*, a guinea a week — Ordinary dinner, six l. a head — Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day — Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon — Our travelling is ten guineas a day — White stockings (4), 18 l. — Wig — Hat.

"*Sunday, Oct.* 29. — We saw the boarding school —

(1) There was in France but one *Grand Chartreux*, the monastery near Grenoble, founded by St. Bruno, to the 13th prior of which St. Louis applied for an *off-set* of the order to be established in Paris, where he placed them in his château de *Vauvert*, which stood in the Rue d'Enfer. The good people of Paris believed that the château of Vauvert, before St. Louis had fixed the Carthusians there, was *haunted*, and thence the street was called Rue d'Enfer. — C.

(2) Sir George Colebrooke. — C.

(3) The celebrated Admiral, afterwards Lord Rodney: he was residing abroad on account of pecuniary embarrassments, and, on the breaking out of the war in 1778, the Marshal Duc de Biron generously offered him a loan of a thousand louis d'ors, to enable him to return to take his part in the service of his country. — C.

(4) That is, 18 *livres*. Two pair of white silk stockings were probably purchased. — M.

The *Enfans trouvés* — A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour — They lose a third, take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them — Want nurses — Saw their chapel.

"Went to St. Eustatia (1), saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist — Boys taught at one time, girls at another — The sermon: the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at *the name* — his action uniform, not very violent.

"*Monday, Oct.* 30. — We saw the library of St Germain (2) — A very noble collection — *Codex Divinorum Officiorum* 1459 — a letter, square like that of the *Offices* perhaps the same — The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheym — *Meursius*, 12 v fol. — *Amadis*, in French, 3 vol fol — CATHOLICON *sine colophone*, but of 1460 — Two other editions (3), one by —— *Augustin de Civitate Dei* without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems.

"I dined with Col. Drumgould; had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"*Tuesday, Oct* 31. — I lived at the Benedictines; meagre day, soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce, fried fish, lentils, tasteless in themselves — In the library, where I found *Maffeus's de Historiâ*

(1) The parish church of St. Eustache. — C.

(2) St Germain des Prés, the too celebrated *abbaye*. — C.

(3) I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Maittaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the "*Catholicon*" which Dr. Johnson mentions here, with *names* which I cannot make out. I read "one by *Latinius*, one by *Boedinus*." I have deposited the original MS. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr. Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.

Indicâ: *Promontorium flectere*, *to double the Cape*—I parted very tenderly from the prior and Friar Wilkes.

"*Maitre des Arts*, 2 y.—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y.—*Licentiate*, 2 y.—*Doctor Th.* 2 y. in all 9 years—For the Doctorate three disputations, *Major*, *Minor*, *Sorbonica*—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuit's College.

"*Wednesday, Nov.* 1.—We left Paris—St. Denis, a large town: the church not very large, but the middle aisle is very lofty and awful. On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroyed the symmetry of the sides. The organ is higher above the pavement than I have ever seen. The gates are of brass. On the middle gate is the history of our Lord. The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome: we could not enter further, and it was almost dark.

"*Thursday, Nov.* 2.—We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé. This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes. The water seems to be too near the house. All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried under ground—The house is magnificent—The cabinet seems well stocked; what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small, that I doubt its reality—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth—Nothing was [preserved] in spirits; all was dry—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout—The toucan, long broad beak—The stables were of very great length—The kennel had no scents—There was a mockery of a village—The ménagerie had few animals (1)—

(1) The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more at-

Two fausans (1), or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild — There is a forest, and, I think, a park — I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

"*Friday, Nov.* 3. — We came to Compeigne, a very large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court — The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise — Talk of painting — The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid — I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier — At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city — The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothic and Corinthian — We entered a very noble parochial church — Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

"*Saturday, Nov.* 4. — We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambray, not long after three — We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

"*Sunday, Nov.* 5. — We saw the cathedral — It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side. The choir splendid. The balustrade in one part brass. The *Neff* very high and grand. The altar silver as far as it is seen. The vestments very splendid — At the Benedictines' church ——"

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quaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr. Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.

(1) It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *fossane*. It should be observed, that the person who showed this ménagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brazilian weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's "Synopsis of Quadrupeds."

Here his Journal (1) ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any more after this time, I know not; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination, as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated, *that he could not see* (2); and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative. (3)

(1) My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Andrew Lumisden, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.

(2) Miss Reynolds, who knew him longer, and saw him more constantly than Mr. Boswell, says, "Dr. Johnson's sight was so *very defective*, that he could scarcely distinguish the face of his most intimate acquaintance at half a yard, and in general it was observable, that his critical remarks on *dress*, &c. were the *result of very close* inspection of the object, partly from curiosity, and partly from a desire of exciting admiration of his perspicuity, of which he was not a little ambitious." — *Recollections.* — C

(3) "Mr Thrale loved prospects, and was mortified that his friend could not enjoy the sight of those different dispositions of wood and water, hill and valley, that travelling through England and France affords a man. But when he wished to point them out to his companion, 'Never heed such nonsense,' would be the reply: 'a blade of grass is always a blade of grass, whether in one country or another. Let us, if we *do* talk, talk about something; men and women are my subjects of inquiry; let us see how these differ from those we have left behind.' — When we were at Rouen, he took a great fancy to the Abbé Roffette, with whom he conversed about the destruction of the order of Jesuits, and condemned it loudly, as a blow to the general power of the church, and likely to be followed with

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour, was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it: but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgould, a very high man, Sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, Sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent."

He observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean; the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England; and

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many and dangerous innovations, which might at length become fatal to religion itself, and shake even the foundation of Christianity. The gentleman seemed to wonder and delight in his conversation: the talk was all in Latin, which both spoke fluently, and Dr. Johnson pronounced a long eulogium upon Milton with so much ardour, eloquence, and ingenuity, that the abbé rose from his seat and embraced him. My husband, seeing them apparently so charmed with the company of each other, politely invited the abbé to England, intending to oblige his friend; who, instead of thanking, reprimanded him severely before the man, for such a sudden burst of tenderness towards a person he could know nothing at all of; and thus put a sudden finish to all his own and Mr. Thrale's entertainment from the company of the Abbé Roffette. His dislike of the French was well known to both nations, I believe; but he applauded the number of their books and the graces of their style. 'They have few sentiments,' said he, 'but they express them neatly; they have little meat too, but they dress it well.'" — PIOZZI.

Mr. Thrale justly observed, that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity; for they could not eat their meat, unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people; they will spit upon any place. At Madame [Du Bocage's,] a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside, but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise*. The spout of the teapot did not pour freely; she bade the footman blow into it. (1) France is worse than Scotland in every thing but climate. Nature has done more for the French; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done. (2)

(1) Miss Reynolds's "Recollections" preserve this story as told her by Baretti, who was of the party. — "Going one day to drink tea with Madame du Bocage, she happened to produce an old china teapot, which Mrs. Strickland, who made the tea, could not make pour. '*Soufflez, soufflez, madame, dedans*,' cried Madame du Bocage, '*il se rectifie immédiatement, essayez, je vous en prie*.' The servant then thinking that Mrs. Strickland did not understand what his lady said, took up the teapot to *rectify* it, and Mrs. Strickland had quite a struggle to prevent his blowing into the spout. Madame du Bocage all this while had not the least idea of its being any impropriety, and wondered at Mrs. Strickland's stupidity. She came over to the latter, caught up the teapot, and blew into the spout with all her might; then finding it pour, she held it up in triumph, and repeatedly explained, '*Voilà, voilà, j'ai regagné l'honneur de ma théière*.' She had no sugar-tongs, and said something that showed she expected Mrs. Strickland to use her fingers to sweeten the cups. '*Madame, je n'oserois*.' — '*Oh mon Dieu! quel grand quan-quam les Anglois font de peu de chose*.'" — C.

(2) In a letter written a few days after his return from France, he says, "The French have a clear air and a fruitful soil; but their mode of common life is gross and incommodious, and disgusting. I am come home convinced that no improvement of general use is to be found among them." — M.

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me, that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London (1);—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned, that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." Johnson. "Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools, to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs." "But, Sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" Johnson. "Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others." (2)

(1) Foote seems to have *embellished* a little in saying that Johnson did not alter his dress at Paris; as in his journal is a memorandum about white stockings, wig, and hat. In another place we are told that "during his travels in France he was furnished with a French-made wig of handsome construction." — Blakeway. — By a note in Johnson's diary (Hawkins's "Life," p. 517.), it appears, that he had laid out thirty pounds in clothes for his French journey. - M.

(2) Johnson. "The French, sir, are a very silly people. They have no common life. Nothing but the two ends, beggary and nobility. Sir, they are made up in every thing of two extremes. They have no common sense, they have no common manners, no common learning — gross ignorance, or *les belles lettres*." A Lady [Mrs. Thrale]. "Indeed, even in their dress — their frippery finery, and their beggarly coarse linen. They had, I thought, no politeness; their civilities never indicated more good will than the talk of a parrot, indiscriminately using the same set of superlative phrases, '*à la merveille*,' to every one alike. They really seemed to have no expressions for sincerity and truth." Johnson. "They are much behind-hand, stupid, ignorant creatures. At Fontainebleau I saw a horse-race — every thing was wrong; the heaviest weight was put upon the weakest horse, and all the jockeys wore the same colour coat." A Gentleman. "Had you any acquaintance in Paris?" Johnson. "No, I did not stay long enough to make

While Johnson was in France, he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the royal academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation: yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank, who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise, he answered, "because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I

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any. I spoke only Latin, and I could not have much conversation. There is no good in letting the French have a superiority over you every word you speak.—On telling Mr. Baretti of the proof that Johnson gave of the stupidity of the French in the management of their horse-races,—that all the jockeys wore the same colour coat, &c., he said that was 'like Johnson's remarks —He could not see.'—But it was observed that he could inquire; —'yes,' and it was by the answers he received that he was misled, for he asked, what did the first jockey wear? answer, green; what the second? green; what the third? green, which was true; but, then, the greens were all different greens, and very easily distinguished.—Johnson was perpetually making mistakes; so, on going to Fontainebleau, when we were about three fourths of the way, he exclaimed with amazement, that now we were between Paris and the King of France's court, and yet we had not met one carriage coming from thence, or even one going thither! On which all the company in the coach burst out a laughing, and immediately cried out, 'Look, look, there is a coach gone by, there is a chariot, there is a postchaise!' I dare say we saw a hundred carriages, at least, that were going to or coming from Fontainebleau." *Miss Reynolds's Recollections.* —C.

have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769; yet he wrote it, I imagine, pretty well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one:

LETTER 236. A MADAME LA COMTESSE DE ——.

"May 16. 1771.

"Oui, madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut-il partir? Est-ce que je m'ennuye? Je m'ennuyerai ailleurs. Est-ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espere rien. Aller voir ce que j'ai vû, être un peu rejoui, un peu degouté, me ressouvenir que la vie se passe, et qu'elle se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors; voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'annee. Que Dieu vous donne, madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y livrer trop."

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner; and in justice to him it is proper to add, that Dr. Johnson told me I might rely both on the correctness of his memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. "When Madame de Boufflers (1) was first in England," said Beauclerk, "she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into

(1) La Comtesse de Boufflers was the mistress of the Prince of Conti, and aspired to be his wife. She was a bel-esprit, and in that character thought it necessary to be an Anglomane, and to visit England; which she did in 1763.—C.

Inner Temple Lane, when all at once I heard a voice like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who, it seems, upon a little reflection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and, eager to show himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple-gate, and, brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. 'His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Père Boscovich (1) was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and at Dr. Douglas's, now Bishop of Salisbury. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation. (2) When at Paris, Johnson

(1) See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 140. Boscovich was a jesuit, born at Ragusa in 1711, who first introduced the Newtonian philosophy into Italy. He visited London in 1760, and was there elected into the Royal Society. He died in 1787. — C.

(2) Boscovich had a ready current flow of that flimsy phraseology with which a priest may travel through Italy, Spain, and Germany. Johnson scorned what he called colloquial barbarisms. It was his pride to speak his best. He went on, after a little practice, with as much facility as if it was his native tongue. One sentence I remember. Observing that Fontenelle at first opposed the Newtonian philosophy, and embraced it afterwards, his words were: *Fontenellus, ni fallor, in extremâ senectute, fuit transfuga ad castra Newtoniana.* — Murphy.

thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the journalist: "*Vir est acerrimi ingenii et paucarum literarum.*"

LETTER 227. TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 5. 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR, — Mr. Alexander Maclean, the young laird of Col, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to show attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am, with respectful attachment, my dear Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

Mr. Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of the year Dr. Burney informs me that "he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted." A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentlemen recollects, shall here be inserted.

"I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me."

"The writer of an epitaph should not be considered

as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath."

"There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other."

"More is learned in public than in private schools, from emulation; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody."

"I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss —— (1) was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is,

'To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.'

She tells the children, 'This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs, and a tail; see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.' If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*."

"After having talked slightingly of music, he was

(1) Miss Letitia Aiken, who married Mr. Barbauld, and published "Easy Lessons for Children, &c. &c." — C.

observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord; and with eagerness he called to her, 'Why don't you dash away like Burney?' Dr. Burney upon this said to him, 'I believe, Sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.' Johnson with candid complacency replied, 'Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.'"

"He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before any body appeared. When on a subsequent day he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning when he had been too early. 'Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*.'"

"Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, 'Why, Sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man's face has had more wear and tear.'"

LETTER 228. TO MRS. MONTAGU. (1)

"Dec. 15. 1775.

"MADAM, — Having, after my return from a little ramble to France, passed some time in the country, I did not hear, till I was told by Miss Reynolds, that you were in town; and when I did hear it, I heard likewise that you were ill. To have you detained among us by sickness is to enjoy your presence at too dear a rate. I suffer myself to be flattered with hope that only half the intelligence is now true, and that you are now so well as to be able to leave us, and so kind as not to be willing. I am, Madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Mrs. Montagu's recent kindness to Miss Williams was not lost on Johnson. His letters to that lady became more elaborately respectful, and his subsequent mention of her took, as we shall see, a high tone of panegyric. — C.

LETTER 229. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"Dec. 17. 1775.

"MADAM, — All that the esteem and reverence of mankind can give you has been long in your possession, and the little that I can add to the voice of nations will not much exalt; of that little, however, you are, I hope, very certain. — I wonder, Madam, if you remember *Col* in the Hebrides? The brother and heir of poor *Col* has just been to visit me, and I have engaged to dine with him on Thursday. I do not know his lodging, and cannot send him a message, and must therefore suspend the honour which you are pleased to offer to, Madam, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 230. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"Thursday, Dec. 21. 1775.

"MADAM, — I know not when any letter has given me so much pleasure or vexation as that which I had yesterday the honour of receiving. That you, Madam, should wish for my company is surely a sufficient reason for being pleased; — that I should delay twice, what I had so little right to expect even once, has so bad an appearance, that I can only hope to have it thought that I am ashamed. — You have kindly allowed me to name a day. Will you be pleased, Madam, to accept of me any day after Tuesday? Till I am favoured with your answer, or despair of so much condescension, I shall suffer no engagement to fasten itself upon me. — I am, Madam, your most obliged and most humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him Dec. 18., not in good spirits:

"Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence

has seized you severely: sometimes my imagination, which is upon occasions prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct."

LETTER 231. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 23. 1775.

"DEAR SIR, — Never dream of any offence. How should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent; I shall make haste to disperse them; but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

"Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his lordship. Mr. Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted; he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

"You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser. I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping; I have had quieter nights than are common with me. I cannot but rejoice that Joseph (1) has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

"Young *Col* brought me your letter. He is a very

(1) Joseph Ritter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr. Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.

pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being. I have had a letter from *Rasay*, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

"My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who does not love me; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them. — I am, my dear, dear Sir, &c. "SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 232. TO MR. GRANGER. (1)

(About 1775, but has no date.)

"SIR, — When I returned from the country I found your letter; and would very gladly have done what you desire, had it been in my power. Mr. Farmer is, I am confident, mistaken in supposing that he gave me any such pamphlet or cut. I should as soon have suspected myself, as Mr. Farmer, of forgetfulness; but that I do not know, except from your letter, the name of Arthur O'Toole (2), nor recollect that I ever heard of it before. I think it impossible that I should have suffered such a total obliteration from my mind of any thing which was ever there. This at least is certain; that I do not know of any such pamphlet; and equally certain I desire you to think it, that if I had it, you should immediately receive it from, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Author of the "Biographical History of England."— C.

(2) [The pamphlet alluded to was written by John Taylor, the water-poet, and entitled "Honour of the Noble Captain O'Toole, 1622." Some account of O'Toole will be found in Granger, vol. ii. p. 100.]

CHAPTER II.

1776.

Law of Entail.— Boswell's Melancholy.— John Wesley. — Clarendon Press — Booksellers' Profits — Bolt Court. — Mrs. Thrale's Birth-day — Entails. — Smith's "Wealth of Nations." — Lawyers and Law-suits. — Scotch Militia bill — Obligation in settling Estates. — "Johnsoniana — Value of Truth. — Monastic Orders. — Carthusians. — Religious Austerities — Wine bibbing. — Fasting. — Influence of Education. — Arithmetic — Sea Life.

In 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public: but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

LETTER 283. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 10. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far and far behind. Why I did not despatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover; but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole

Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill: every body else is as usual.

"Among the papers I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened; and a paper (¹) for 'The Chronicle,' which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both. I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

"I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady, (for I know she does not love me,) and the young ladies, and the young laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr. Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities, which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony, or manor of Auchinleck (pronounced *Affleck*) in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas

(1) No doubt an advertisement of apology to Baxdy.—C.

Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, "*dilecto familiari nostro;*" and assigning as the cause of the grant, "*pro bono et fideli servitio nobis præstito.*" Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his sovereign, at the fatal field of Flodden, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs-male, to David Boswell, my father's great-grand-uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burthened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grand-father, an eminent lawyer, not only re-purchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands; and my father, who was one of the judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law (1), to secure it to his family in

(1) Acts of Parliament of Scotland, 1685, cap. 22.

perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of his marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or, in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs-general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs-male, however remote, which I maintained by arguments, which appeared to me to have considerable weight. (1) And in the particular

(1) As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort, which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of Scripture, "He was yet *in the loins of his* FATHER when Melchisedeck met him," (Heb. vii. 10.); and consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood. And, secondly, independent of this theory (which, if true, should completely exclude heirs-general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay even a grandson by a son, to a daughter), be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest; because, however distant from the representative at the time, that remote heir-male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant. A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is pre-

case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which he held it, which was as heir-male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr. Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

LETTER 234. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Jan. 15. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I was much impressed by your letter, and if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it: but whether I am equal to it I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could not you tell

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ferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance; in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants. I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere probability there will be a certainty that *the nearest heir-male, at whatever period, has the same right of blood with the first heir-male, namely, the original purchaser's eldest son.*

your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity; and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me as any thing occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

"If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

"Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell; and tell her, that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 295. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 3. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write, because you request it.

"Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner; and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgment shall direct or passion incite.

"But natural right would avail little without the protection of law; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore in society not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

"In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

"Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it, that he can sell it, and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

"Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole; his posterity would be disappointed; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

"He that may do more may do less. He that by selling or squandering may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part by a partial settlement.

"Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes: the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

"As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know; and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and free-will be kept unviolated? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty? If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females.

"Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portion to his

daughters? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land, and of leaving money to be raised from land; between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

"Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law, many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance; would not then the tenure of estates be changed? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another?

"You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers (1): I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

"As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention: for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted.

"Intentions must be gathered from acts. When he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males? If he could have done it, he seems to have shown, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

(1) Which term I applied to all the heirs male.

"If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement; and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example; it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shown to remote relations.

"As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath anything, but upon legal terms; he can grant no power which the law denies; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the power which the law allows.

"Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended this act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother. If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded? It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote; and the exclusion is purely consequential.

"These, dear Sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence. I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a lawyer and a Christian. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. I am, Sir, your affectionate servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed,

with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that "the succession of heirs-general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record;" observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs-male; and that though an heir-male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time: and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burthens upon it, there was nothing given the heirs-male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience," said his lordship, "which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side."

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr. Johnson, begging to hear from him again upon this interesting question.

LETTER 236. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 9. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position: 'He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestors inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgment or opinion.' If this be true, you may join with your father.

"Further consideration produces another conclusion: 'He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors gives his heirs some reason to complain if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity. For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason?' If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

"It cannot but occur that 'Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.' When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them: but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

"These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously (1), if it contains any conviction, includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed, that 'He who inherits an estate, inherits all the power legally concomitant;' and that 'He who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation, which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence.' In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples.

"If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight.

(1) I had reminded him of his observation, mentioned Vol. III. p. 205.

You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave; and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

"Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions; I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition, that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability, which we discover. Providence gives the power, of which reason teaches the use. I am, dear Sir, your most faithful servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell; make my compliments to her, and to the little people. Don't burn papers; they may be safe enough in your own box; you will wish to see them hereafter."

LETTER 237. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 15. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.(1) I hope that it will at last end well.

(1) The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses was settled by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already

Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly, and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are barbarians, their want of *stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you will never find. I am afraid of scruples.

"I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers; part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice; I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before. Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume: his accuracy strikes me with wonder; his narrative is far superior to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned. I am afraid that the trouble which my irregularity and delay has cost him is greater, far greater,

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done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the lands. I was freed by Dr. Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters: for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.

than any good that I can do him will ever recompense; but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

"Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. "I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 238. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 20. 1776.

"You have illuminated my mind, and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better not to act too suddenly."

Letter 239 TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Feb. 24. 1776.

"Dear Sir,—I am glad that what I could think say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not be rash. I hope that, as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty. When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

"You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge (1), and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. I am, dear Sir, &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr. Johnson wrote concerning the question which per-

(1) A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

plexed me so much, his lordship wrote to me: "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him; informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

LETTER 240. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 5. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I have not had your letter half an hour; as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer. I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the 1st of April.

"Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add that I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 241. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 12. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time; of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day. Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes; and mention very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, Sir, your faithful servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 242. TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

"Feb. 6. 1776.

"SIR,—When I received your 'Commentary on the Bible,' I durst not at first flatter myself that I was to keep it, having so little claim to so valuable a present; and when Mrs. Hall informed me of your kindness, was hindered from time to time from returning you those thanks, which I now entreat you to accept.—I have thanks likewise to return you for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has upon the public, I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right, who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair, while Plato stayed.—I am, reverend Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the university of Oxford with the continuation of his "History," and such other of his lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establish-

ment of a *manège* in the university.(1) The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person (2) being now recommended to Dr. Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding-school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution; the profits arising from the Clarendon press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his *alma mater*.

LETTER 243. TO THE REV. DR. WETHERELL.

"March 12. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr. ******'s letter.

"The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. The complaint (3) which he makes, I have

(1) The Clarendon MSS., and any money which might arise from the sale or publication of them, were given by Catherine, Duchess Dowager of Queensbury, as a beginning of a fund for supporting a manège or academy for riding, and other useful exercises, in Oxford, pursuant to, and in confirmation of, the last will of Henry, Lord Hyde, bearing date the 10th day of August, 1751.—HALL.

(2) A Mr. Carter. See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 246.—C.

(3) I suppose the complaint was, that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications

heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless, with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity; and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of another: for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the university can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

"To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale. Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent; we inherit many of our instruments and materials; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and, in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

"It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

"We will call our primary agent in London, M Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand; by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or, in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed the process of commerce is interrupted.

"We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

"The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great; but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five per cent. between six and seven shillings in the pound; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadel with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver an hundred and four.

"The profits will then stand thus: — Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly book: Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five and twenty, will send it to his country customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the

certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten per cent. which is expected in the wholesale trade: the country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence, and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

"With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

"Thus, dear Sir, I have been incited by Dr.******'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider. — I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON." (1)

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr. Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson's Court, No. 7, to Bolt Court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet Street. My reflection at the time upon this change, as marked in my journal, is as follows: "I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name (2); but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a

(1) I am happy, in giving this full and clear statement to the public, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr. Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.

(2) He said, when in Scotland, that he was *Johnson of that Ilk.*

happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination, while I trod its pavement in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr. Thrale's in the Borough (1), I hastened thither, and found Mrs. Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs. Thrale

(1) I went into his room the morning of my birthday (1776), and said to him, "Nobody sends me any verses now, because I am five and thirty years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six, I remember." My being just recovered from illness and confinement, will account for the manner in which he burst out suddenly, without the least previous hesitation, and without having entertained the smallest intention towards it half a minute before: —

"Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five.
Could philosophers contrive
Life to stop at thirty-five,
Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five:
For, howe'er we boast and strive,
Life declines from thirty-five;
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five;
And all who wisely wish to wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five."

"And now," said he, as I was writing them down, "you may see what it is to come for poetry to a dictionary-maker; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly." And so they do. Dr. Johnson did indeed possess an almost Tuscan power of improvisation. — PIOZZI. — He was much pleased with an Italian *improvisatore*, whom he saw at Streatham, and with whom he talked much in Latin. He told him, if he had not been a witness to his faculty himself, he should not have thought it possible. He said, Isaac Hawkins Browne had endeavoured at it in English, but could not get beyond thirty verses. — HAWKINS.

and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus* (1); I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of mind." "There are many," she replied, "who admire and respect Mr. Johnson; but you and I *love* him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. "But," said he, "before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend Dr. Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him; being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs. Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity, and said, "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner; of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages, not only to the chief

(1) See Vol. II. p. 195.

but to his people; an establishment which extends upwards and downwards; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing."

He said, "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country serieses of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country: for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once?" JOHNSON. "So far, Sir, as money produces good, it would be an advantage; for then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one-third, or perhaps one-half of the land of a country kept free for commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives,

be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise: but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as, in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground." (1) JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt."

I mentioned Dr. Adam Smith's book on "The Wealth of Nations," which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physic. JOHNSON. "He is mistaken, Sir; a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer: but trade procures what is more

(1) The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation is enjoyed by none of his majesty's subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *fine* and *recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation to men, who, having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The king, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject." I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his 'Commentaries.' But upon the continent the great writers on law have not all been in practice: Grotius, indeed, was; but Puffendorf was not; Burlamaqui was not."(1)

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine (2), who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wrong to stir up lawsuits; but when once it is certain that a lawsuit is to go on,

(1) Neither Grotius, Puffendorf, nor Burlamaqui, were writers on what can be strictly called practical law; and the great writers on practical law, in all countries, have been practical lawyers. — C.

(2) Probably Mr. Wedderburn. — C.

there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit, rather than another" BOSWELL. "You would not solicit employment, Sir, if you were a lawyer." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia, in supporting which his lordship had made an able speech (1) in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation. JOHNSON. "As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, Sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way, by having a militia paid. If they are afraid,

(1) Boswell writes to Mr. Wilkes on this subject, April 20. 1776: — "I am delighted to find that my honoured friend and Mæcenas, my Lord Mountstuart, made an excellent speech on the Scotch militia bill." — Wilkes's Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 319. Mr. Boswell's *Mæcenas*, however, subsequently disappointed his hopes, and hence, perhaps, some of those observations about "*courting the great*" and "*apathy of patrons*" which Mr. Boswell occasionally makes. — C.

and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia." BOSWELL. "You should not talk of *we* and *you*, Sir; there is now an *union*." JOHNSON. "There must be a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, 'Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep a greater number of militia,' it would be unreasonable." In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land-tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of public revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.

He thus discoursed upon supposed obligation in settling estates: "Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it; but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir; there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice according to my liking. If I have

a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance; but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir at law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the king."

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars, and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of "Johnsoniana, or Bon-mots of Dr. Johnson." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon-mots* do?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, Sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing?" BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, 'Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in Dr. Johnson's own name, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine.'" JOHNSON. "I shall give myself no trouble about the matter."

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious

publications; but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe: but it would be a picture of nothing. *******(1) (naming a worthy friend of ours) used to think a story, a story, till I showed him that truth was essential to it." I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON. "Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of every body." (2)

(1) Although Mr. Langton was a man of strict and accurate veracity, I suspect, from the term *worthy friend*, which Boswell generally appropriates to Mr. Langton, as well as the number of asterisks, that he was here meant: if so, the opinion which Johnson corrected was probably one stated by Mr. Langton in *very early* life, for he knew Johnson when he was only fifteen years of age. — C.

(2) On another occasion he said, "A story is a specimen of human manners, and derives its sole value from its truth. When Foote has told me something, I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow; when Reynolds tells me something, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more." — PIOZZI. — A gentleman sitting next to Johnson at a table where Foote was entertaining the company with some exaggerated recitals, whispered his neighbour, "Why, Dr. Johnson, it is impossible that this impudent fellow should know the truth of half what he has told

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. (1)

The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of every thing that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet Street. "A gentlewoman," said he, "begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed. (2)

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us." "Nay, sir," replied Johnson, hastily, "if we venture to come into company with Foote, we have no right, I think, to look for truth." — CRADOCK.

(1) One reason why his memory was so particularly exact might be derived from his rigid attention to veracity; being always resolved to relate every fact as it stood, he looked even on the smaller parts of life with minute attention, and remembered such passages as escape cursory and common observers. His veracity was, indeed, from the most trivial to the most solemn occasions, strict even to severity; he scorned to embellish a story with fictitious circumstances, which (he used to say) took off from its real value. "A story," he said, "should be a specimen of life and manners; but if the surrounding circumstances are false, as it is no more a representation of reality, it is no longer worthy our attention. — PIOZZI.

(2) As he was walking along the Strand, a gentleman stepped

We landed at the Temple Stairs, where we parted. I found him in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian

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out of some neighbouring tavern, with his napkin in his hand and no hat, and stopping him as civilly as he could — "I beg your pardon, sir; but you are Dr. Johnson, I believe." "Yes, sir." "We have a wager depending on your reply: pray, sir, is it *irreparable* or *irrepairable* that one should say?" "The *last*, I think, sir," answered Dr. Johnson, "for the adverb [adjective] ought to follow the verb; but you had better consult my Dictionary than me, for that was the result of more thought than you will now give me time for." "No, no," replied the gentleman, gaily, "the *book* I have no certainty at all of; but here is the *author*, to whom I referred: I have won my twenty guineas quite fairly, and am much obliged to you, sir;" so shaking Dr. Johnson kindly by the hand, he went back to finish his dinner or dessert. — He once told me that a young gentleman called on him one morning, and told him that, having dropped suddenly into an ample fortune, he was willing to qualify himself for genteel society by adding some literature to his other endowments, and wished to be put in an easy way of obtaining it. Johnson recommended the University; "for you read Latin, sir, with *facility*." "I read it a little, to be sure, sir." "But do you read it *with facility*, I say?" "Upon my word, sir, I do not very well know, but I rather believe not." Dr. Johnson now began to recommend other branches of science; and, advising him to study natural history, there arose some talk about animals, and their divisions into oviparous and viviparous. "And the cat here, sir," said the youth, who wished for instruction, "pray in which class is she?" Our Doctor's patience and desire of doing good began now to give way. "You would do well," said he, "to look for some person to be always about you, sir, who is capable of explaining such matters, and not come to us to know whether the cat lays eggs or not: get a discreet man to keep you company; there are many who would be glad of your table and fifty pounds a year." The young gentleman retired, and in less than a week informed his friends that he had fixed on a preceptor to whom no objections could be made; but when he named as such one of the most distinguished characters* in our age or nation, Dr. Johnson fairly gave himself up to an honest burst of laughter, at seeing this youth at such a surprising distance from common knowledge of the world. — Piozzi.

* Mr. Burke. — Malone MS. — C.

convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself, but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit: for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said, 'She should remember this as long as she lived.'" I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his "Rambler" and "Idler," he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it. JOHNSON. "Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends (1), I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it."

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon the subject: "A man who has been drinking wine at all freely should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

He allowed very great influence to education. "I do not deny, Sir, but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining (2): yet we find a prodigious difference in

(1) Probably Mr. Boswell himself. — C.

(2) This appears to be an ill-chosen illustration. It seems, on the contrary, that there are few powers of mind so unequally given as those connected with *numbers*. The few who have them in any extraordinary degree, like Jedediah Buxton, and like the boys Bidder and Colborne, of our times, seem to have little other intellectual power. See accounts of Buxton in Gent. Mag. vol. xxi. p. 61. and vol. xxiv. p. 251. — C.

the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it: and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

This is a difficult subject; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land." "Then," said I, "it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON. "It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea, before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as indeed is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

CHAPTER III.

1776.

Excursion to Oxford with Boswell. — Ornamental Architecture. — Statuary. — Advice to Hypochondriacs. — "Anatomy of Melancholy." — Dr. Wetherell. — Dr. Adams. — Conversation. — Bishop Horne. — Walton's "Lives." — Biography. — Dartineuf. — Gibbon. — Steele. — "Tristram Shandy." — Burke. — Blenheim. — Taverns and Inns. — Dyer's "Fleece." — Grainger's "Sugar Cane." — Birmingham. — Legitimation. — Marriage. — Quakers. — Holidays. Nelson's "Festivals." — Mr. Boulton. — Lichfield and its Inhabitants.

On Tuesday, 19th March, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr. Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton college, whom he did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger had no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. Johnson. "I doubt that, Sir." Boswell. "Why, Sir, he will be Atlas with the burthen off his back." Johnson. "But I know not, Sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not

partly the player: he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate." BOSWELL. "I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do." JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir! he will soon be a decayed actor himself."

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, "because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility." For the same reason he satirised statuary. "Painting," said he, "consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect; but a fellow will hack half a year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot." Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste (1); for surely

(1) Dr. Johnson does not seem to have objected to ornamental architecture or statuary *per se*, but to labour *disproportionate* to its utility or effect. In this view, his criticisms are just. The late style of building introduced into London, of colonnades and porticos, without any regard to aspect, climate, or utility, is so absurd to reason, so offensive to taste, and so adverse to domestic comfort, that it reconciles us to the short-lived materials of which these edifices are composed. It would have been well if we had, according to Johnson's sober advice, thought it necessary that the "*magnificence of porticos*," and the "*expense of pilasters*," should have borne some degree of *proportion* to their *utility*. With regard to "statuary," when it does "preserve the varieties of the human frame," it deserves all that Mr. Boswell says for it: but Johnson's objection was that it more frequently produced abortive failures, "*hardly resembling man*." — C.

statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhance the value of a marble head, we should consider, that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow. Dr. Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence. "What, Sir, you will allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary? Why should we allow it then in writing? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments." Johnson smiled with complacency; but said, "Why, Sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge; and his expression was, "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge." "No, Sir," said Gwyn, "I am putting the church *in* the way, that the

people may not *go out of the way.*" JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation). "Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this."

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr. Johnson and I went directly to University college, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr. Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed,—"A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." BOSWELL. "May not he think them down, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise." BOSWELL. "Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry?" JOHNSON. "Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of any thing to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and great power in

what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind."

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, master of University College, with whom Dr. Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL. "I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his 'Political Tracts,' by way of a discourse on the British constitution." BOSWELL. "Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution, both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each." I could perceive that he was displeased with this dialogue. He burst out, "Why should I be always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship

of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St. Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentic information, which, with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr. Adams had distinguished himself by an able Answer (1) to David Hume's "Essay on Miracles." He told me he had once dined in company with Hume in London: that Hume shook hands with him, and said, "You have treated me much better than I deserve;" and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*; he will look upon him as *odious*, though the infidel might think himself in the right.

(1) [This tract appeared in 1752, and was republished in 1754.]

A robber who reasons as the gang do in the "Beggar's Opera," who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife, but shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him in making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down stairs, or run him through the body; that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An infidel then should not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me and said, "when a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his

bad language." ADAMS. "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*."

Dr. Adams told us, that in some of the colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON. "They are in the right, Sir: there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by: for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON. "No animated conversation (1), Sir; for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear; and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said, '*Mallem cum Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio recte sapere.*' In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Nores' Comments upon Horace (2), you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right."

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON (after a reverie of meditation). "Ay! here I used to play

(1) See *post*, March 30. 1783, his distinction between *talk* and conversation. — C.

(2) A learned Cypriot, who, when the Turks took Cyprus in 1570, retired into Italy, where he published several Italian and Latin works; among the latter was a "Commentary on Horace's Art of Poetry." — C.

at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. (1) Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel (2), a whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney; and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent whig; but he had been a scoundrel all along, to be sure." BOSWELL. "Was he a scoundrel, Sir, in any other way than that of being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at draughts?" JOHNSON. "Sir, we never played for *money*."

He then carried me to visit Dr. Bentham, canon of Christ Church, and divinity professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the canons of Christ Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the masters and fellows, it being St. Cuthbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr. Horne, late President of Magdalen College and Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities in different respects the public has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose

(1) *Fludyer* entered within a month of Johnson's entrance. Jones must have been about a year their senior, having become M.A. March, 1734.—HALL.

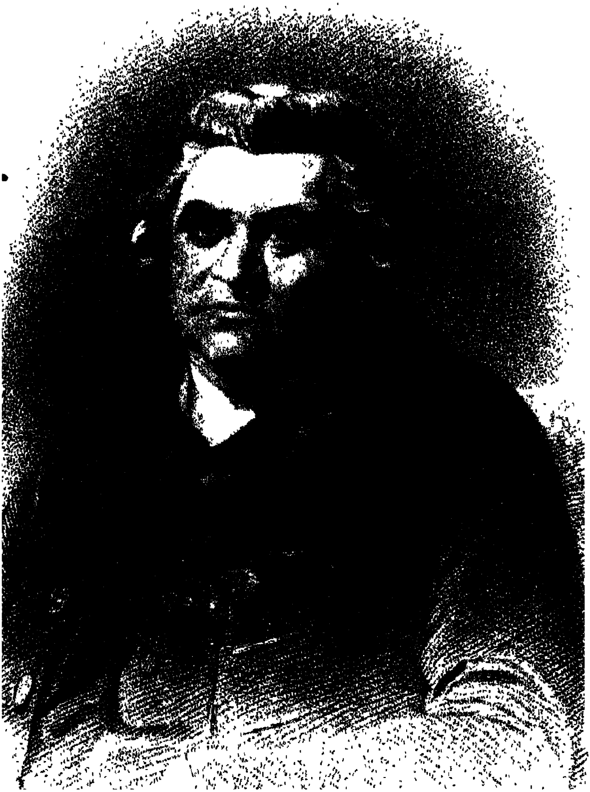
(2) See *post*, March 27. 1776, n.—C.

character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's Lives, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON. "In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's Lives. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a late edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored (1); and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor."

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr. Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. JOHNSON. "It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late bishop (2), whom I was to assist in writing some

(1) The vision which Johnson speaks of was not in the original publication of Walton's "Life of Dr. Donne," in 1640. It is not found in the three earliest editions; but was first introduced into the fourth, in 1765. I have not been able to discover what modern republication is alluded to in which it was omitted. It has very properly been restored by Dr. Zouch.—J. BOSWELL, jun.

(2) The Bishop was Zachary Pearce, and the Chaplain, Mr. Derby. See *post*, *sub* May, 1777.—C.



T. Warton

memoirs of his lordship, could tell me scarcely any thing."(1)

I said, Mr. Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr. Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of "The Muse in Livery." JOHNSON. "I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life; yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf(2), a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'"

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of the "*Biographia Britannica*." Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so

(1) It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr. Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English; and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase, "*little or nothing*," i. e. almost so little as to be nothing.

(2) This gentleman, whose proper name was *Charles Dartiqurnave* (pronounced and commonly written Darteneuf), is now only recollected as a celebrated epicure; but he was a man of wit, pleasure, and political importance at the beginning of the last century — the associate of Swift, Pope, Addison, and Steele — a contributor to the Tatler, and a member of the Kit-Cat Club, of which collection his portrait is one of the best. He was Paymaster of the Board of Works, and Surveyor of the royal gardens; and died in 1737. It was suspected that he was a natural son of Charles the Second, by a foreign lady; and his physiognomy seems to evidence a foreign origin. — C.

much in his great work, "A Political Survey of Great Britain," as the world had been taught to expect (1); and had said to me that he believed Campbell's disappointment on account of the bad success of that work had killed him. He this evening observed of it, "That work was his death." Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, "I believe so, from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book."

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity. I said it was not fair to attack us unexpectedly; he should have warned us of our danger, before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, "Spring-guns and men-traps set here." The author had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the church of England to the church of Rome—from the church of Rome to infidelity,—I did not despair yet of seeing him a methodist preacher. JOHNSON (laughing). "It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it." (2) BOSWELL. "I am not quite sure of that, Sir."

(1) Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed.

(2) As there can be no doubt that Gibbon and his History are the author and the work here alluded to, I once thought

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his "Christian Hero," with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON. "Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices."

Mr. Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson whether a man's being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

I censured some ludicrous fantastic dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretti had lately published. He joined with me, and said, "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked

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that some sceptical expressions in the celebrated 15th and 16th chapters might have prompted this sarcasm, but I am now inclined to suspect that it may have referred to some Oxford rumours of earlier infidelity. Gibbon, in his Memoirs, confesses that the erratic course of study, which finally led to his conversion to Popery, began at Oxford by a turn towards "oriental learning and an inclination to study Arabic." "His tutor," he adds, "discouraged this childish fancy." He complains, too, of the invidious *whispers* which were afterwards circulated in Oxford on the subject of his apostacy; and as we may be certain that Johnson did not speak without a meaning, I now believe that some whisper of this early inclination to Arabic learning and the language of the Koran may have reached Johnson, and occasioned this sarcasm. — C. 1835.

of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation.(1) JOHNSON. "Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, Sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another." I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON. "Yes, Burke *is* an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual." It is very pleasing to me to record, that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said, "Now we who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." And once, when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, 21st March, we set out in a postchaise to pursue our ramble. It was a de-

(1) Margaret Caroline Rudd, a woman who lived with one of the brothers Perreau, who were about this time executed (Jan. 17. 1776) for a forgery. Her fame "for extraordinary address and insinuation" was probably very unfounded; it arose from this: she betrayed her accomplices; and they, in return, charged her with being the real author of the forgery, and alleged that they were dupes and instruments in her hands; and, to support this allegation, they and their friends, who were numerous and respectable, exaggerated, to the highest degree, Mrs. Rudd's supposed powers of address and fascination. — C.

lightful day, and we rode through Blenheim park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the epigram made (1) upon it —

"The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
The stream an emblem of his bounty flows;"

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, 'They have *drowned* the epigram." I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us, "You and I, Sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild rough island of Mull, and Blenheim park."

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapelhouse, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house," said he, "in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that every body should be easy; in the nature of things it cannot be: there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are

(1) By Dr. Evans.—C.

sure you are welcome: and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, Sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." (1) He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines:

> "Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn." (2)

My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of Johnson appears in

(1) Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found in his bulky tome a very excellent one upon this subject. "In contradiction to those who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.* 'As soon,' said he, 'as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love; I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.'"

(2) We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines; which I give as they are found in the corrected edition of his works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza ran thus:—

> "Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
> Whate'er his *various tour has* been,
> May sigh to think *how oft* he found
> *His* warmest welcome at an inn."

one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb. 9. 1760. "I have lately been reading one or two volumes of the Rambler; who, excepting against some few hardnesses in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time."

In the afternoon, as we were driving rapidly along in the postchaise, he said to me, "Life has not many things better than this." (1)

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakspeare's native place.

He spoke slightingly of Dyer's "Fleece." "The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, 'The Fleece.'" Having talked of Grainger's "Sugar Cane," I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had

(1) He loved, indeed, the very act of travelling, and I cannot tell how far one might have taken him in a carriage before he would have wished for refreshment. He was therefore in some respects an admirable companion on the road, as he piqued himself upon feeling no inconvenience, and on despising no accommodations. On the other hand, however, he expected no one else to feel any, and felt exceedingly inflamed with anger if any one complained of the rain, the sun, or the dust. "How," said he, "do other people bear them?" As for general uneasiness, or complaints of long confinement in a carriage, he considered all lamentations on their account as proofs of an empty head, and a tongue desirous to talk without materials of conversation. "A mill that goes without grist," said he, "is as good a companion as such creatures." — PIOZZI.

made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus: —

"Now, Muse, let's sing of *rats*."

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified. (1)

This passage does not appear in the printed work, Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *rats*, in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea; for they are thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands: —

(1) Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation: —

"The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion: for the author having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havock made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock-heroic, and a parody of Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice, invoking the muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned."

The above was written by the Bishop when he had not the poem itself to recur to: and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet, as Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not now apply to the printed poem. The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger: — "He was not only a man of genius and learning, but had many excellent virtues; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew." Dr. Johnson said to me, "Percy, Sir, was angry with me for laughing at the Sugar-cane: for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger's rats." — C.

"Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin race,
A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane."

Johnson said, that Dr. Grainger was an agreeable man; a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done; but "The Sugar Cane, a Poem," did not please him (1); for, he exclaimed, "What could he make of a sugar cane? One might as well write the 'Parsley bed, a Poem;' or 'The Cabbage-garden, a Poem.'" BOSWELL. "You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*." JOHNSON. "You know there is already 'The Hop Garden, a Poem;' and I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilised society over the rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them; and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms." He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr. Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON. "The wolf, Sir; why the wolf? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said that we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the gray rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see '*The History of the Gray Rat, by Thomas*

(1) [Yet Dr. Johnson sent a very friendly review of the "Sugar Cane" to the London Chronicle of July 5. 1764. — CHAMBERS.]

Percy, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty" (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL. "I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the gray rat." JOHNSON. "Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat." Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination, when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. "He had practised physic in various situations with no great emolument. A West India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of his accompanying him to the West Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman; but upon the voyage fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition he quarrelled with the gentleman, and declared he would have no connexion with him. So he forfeited the annuity. He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as a rival to him in his practice of physic, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island, that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, 22d March, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and after breakfast went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr.

Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us that "her master was gone out; he was gone to the country; she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception; and Johnson observed, "She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her, "My name is Johnson; tell him I called. Will you remember the name?" She answered with rustic simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, "I don't understand you, Sir." "Blockhead," said he, "I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it. (1) He, however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, "*Johnson*," and then she catched the sound.

We next called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me, "After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well." We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

(1) My worthy friend Mr. Langton, to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my Johnsonian History, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter, after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife, who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, "I took care to let her know what I thought of her." And being asked, "What did you say?" answered, "I told her she was a *scoundrel*."

I talked of legitimation by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON. "I think it a bad thing (1), because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character; nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full right of lawful children, by the posterior consent of the offending parties." His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may at times be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother who is younger than her gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no

(1) Is it not surprising and disgraceful that in a civilised empire like ours, so important a principle as the state of marriage, which is the foundation of our whole civil constitution, should be to this hour vague, obscure, and contradictory? One law for England — a different one, or rather none at all, for Ireland — and for Scotland the monstrous doctrine mentioned in the text. It is to be hoped that Mr. Peel, who has done so much towards rationalising our law on other subjects, will see the necessity of doing something similar on this most important one. — C., 1830.

stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr. Lloyd joined us in the street; and in a little while we met *friend Hector*, as Mr. Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly showed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their majesties, and, like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, "Marriage is the best state for man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness, of the quakers; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity; and that many a man was a quaker without knowing it.

As Dr. Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the quakers, but not the sect; when we were at Mr. Lloyd's, I kept clear of introducing any questions concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of "Barclay's Apology," Johnson laid hold of it; and

the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism in the scriptures; that is false." Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner; and the good quakers had the advantage of him; for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism; which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in a great mistake; for when insisting that the rite of baptism by water was to cease, when the *spiritual* administration of Christ began, he maintained that John the Baptist said, "*My baptism* shall decrease, but *his* shall increase." Whereas the words are, "*He* must increase, but I *must* decrease" [ch. iii. v. 30].

One of them having objected to the "observance of days, and months, and years," Johnson answered, "The church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day will be neglected."

He said to me at another time, "Sir, the holidays observed by our church are of great use in religion." There can be no doubt of this in a limited sense, I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr. Nelson's "Festivals and Fasts," which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible, is a most valuable help

to devotion: and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject, by Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St. Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say, that Scotland is the only Christian country, catholic or protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment, on days set apart for the purpose.

Mr. Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr. Boulton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor showed me himself to the best advantage. I wished Johnson had been with us: for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have "matched his mighty mind." I shall never forget Mr. Boulton's expression to me, "I sell here, Sir, what all the world desires to have — POWER." He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. "Your landlord is in the right, Smith (said Boulton). But I'll tell you what: find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half; and you shall have your goods again."

From Mr. Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that

he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr. Johnson said to me in the morning, "You will see, Sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow.* She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropped out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man can never be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

On our return from Mr. Boulton's, Mr. Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love;* who, though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable and well-bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their schoolfellows, Mr. Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described: "He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his postchaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial; his conversation is quite monosyllabical; and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was? that signal of my

departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare." When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, "Don't grow like Congreve; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me."

When he again talked of Mrs. Careless to-night, he seemed to have his affection revived; for he said, "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular?" JOHNSON. "Ay, Sir, fifty thousand." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts." JOHNSON. "To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the lord chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter." (1)

I wished to have staid at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr. Hector; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city; so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now," said he, "we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned

(1) Yet see *antè*, Vol. III. p. 119. — C.

one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property. (1) We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci*; and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in "The Beaux Stratagem," recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs. Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds; about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She reverenced him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr. Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir," said

(1) I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for February, 1785. [See also the title-page of Vol. I. of this edition.]

he, "I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, Sir, vivacity is much an art (1), and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view, he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked, with surprise, what was the matter, he answered, "*Sh' apprens t'être fif.*"

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson (2), one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse gray coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded;

(1) It appears that quite a contrary conclusion might be drawn from the premises; for the liveliness of the Garrick family was obviously natural and hereditary, and (except perhaps in degree) independent of art or habit. The family was of French extraction, and preserved the vivacity of their original race. — C.

(2) This person's name was Henry. See *post*, Sept. 1. 1777. The "scheme for dressing leather" renders it probable that he was related to the Thomas Jackson, mentioned, *antè*, Vol. I. p. 32., by Mr. Boswell as a *servant*, and by Mrs. Piozzi as a *workman* (in truth, probably, a *partner*) of old Mr. Johnson's, about the time when the failure of some scheme for *dressing leather* or parchment accelerated his bankruptcy. — C.

and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common; to his indistinct account of which, Dr. Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life; though that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale*; and oat cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find, that "*oats*," the "*food of horses*," were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr. Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy; for they had several provincial sounds; as, *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*; *once* pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse* or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out, "Who's for *poonsh*" (1)?

(1) Garrick himself, like the Lichfeldians, always said, *shupreme, shuperior*.—BURNEY. —This is still the vulgar pro-

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place, sail-cloth and streamers for ships; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheep-skins, but upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, Sir," said I, "you are an idle set of people." "Sir," said Johnson, "we are a city of philosophers; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands."

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON. "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it: there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment too very powerful and very pleasing; but it has not its full proportion in his conversation."

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nunciation of Ireland, where the pronunciation of the English language by those who have not expatriated is doubtless that which generally prevailed in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth. — M. — "Shupreme" and "shuperior" are incorrect; yet every one says "shure" and "shugar" for "sure" and "sugar." — C.

When we were by ourselves he told me, "Forty years ago, Sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora, in 'Hob in a Well.'" What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed; but, if we may believe Mr. Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined: he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow," when, in fact, according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon *boards*."

We had promised Mr. Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr. Johnson jocularly proposed to me to write a prologue for the occasion: "A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esqr. from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, "Prologue, spoken before Dr. Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776," would have sounded as well as "Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York at Oxford," in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr. Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr. Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press;

and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a bookseller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr. Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things; and Mr. Green told me that Johnson once said to him, "Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man of war, as of collecting such a museum." Mr. Green's obliging alacrity in showing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristical of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat.*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not unreasonable: for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horseflesh, nobody would employ him; though one may eat horseflesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would. (1)"

(1) Fothergill, a quaker, and Schomberg, a Jew, had the greatest practice of any two physicians of their time. — BURNEY. — Mr. D'Israeli thinks it possible, that Ralph Schomberg (the second son of Dr. Meyer Schomberg, the person mentioned by Dr. Burney), was the person alluded to in the text. Ralph

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs. Aston, one of the maiden sisters of Mrs. Walmesley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

Schomberg was driven from practice and out of society, for some dishonest tampering with the funds of an hospital, with which he was connected. — C.

CHAPTER IV.

1776.

Lichfield. — Peter Garrick. — Death of Mr. Thrale's only Son. — Shakspeare's Mulberry-tree. — Lord Bute. — Marriage. — Questioning. — Sir Fletcher Norton. — Ashbourne. — Dr. Taylor. — "Old Men putting themselves to nurse." — "Il Palmerino d'Inghilterra." — Ingratitude. — Mr. Wedderburne. — "Marrying for Love." — Dr. James. — Melancholy. — Captain Cook. — Omai. — Character of a Soldier. — Good humour of ancient Philosophers. — Public Schools. — English Universities. — Libels on the Dead.

On Sunday, March 24., we breakfasted with Mrs. Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr. Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs. Cobb to St. Mary's Church, and I went to the cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the music, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr. Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying, that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and at-

tempt at mimicry which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr. Johnson went with me to the cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr. Johnson at the Reverend Mr. Seward's, canon residentiary, who inhabited the bishop's palace, in which Mr. Walmesley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr. Seward had, with ecclesiastical hospitality and politeness, asked me in the morning, merely as a stranger, to dine with him; and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr. Johnson and me to spend the evening, and sup with him. He was a genteel, well-bred, dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr. Hunter, Johnson's first schoolmaster. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr. Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanos, from which it appeared, that they were so

very different in depth at different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Brydone's entertaining tour (1), I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr. Johnson, indeed, had said before, independent of this observation, "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the world — shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this?"

On Monday, March 25., we breakfasted at Mrs. Lucy Porter's. Johnson had sent an express to Dr. Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr. Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he had read it, he exclaimed, "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." The phrase *my time*, like the word *age*, is usually understood to refer to an event of a public or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the king — like a gunpowder plot carried into execution — or like another fire of London. When asked, "What is it, Sir?" he answered, "Mr. Thrale has lost his only son!" This was, no doubt, a very great affliction to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, which their

(1) In Sicily and Malta. — C.

friends would consider accordingly; but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I, however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe how Dr. Johnson would be affected. He said, "This is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity." Upon my mentioning that Mr. Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth: "Daughters," said Johnson, warmly, "he'll no more value his daughters than—" I was going to speak. "Sir," said he, "don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said, it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON. "It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think you feel enough." BOSWELL. "And, Sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the mean time; and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated, that they will be capable of being consoled by you, which, in the first violence of it, I believe, would not be the case." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; violent pain of mind, like violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others, as some people have, or pretend to have: but I know this, that *I* would do all in my power to relieve them." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should

pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, Sir; you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy."

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr. Thrale's clerk, and concluded, "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said, "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs. Lucy Porter and some other ladies of the place talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs. Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs. Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house, and garden, and pleasure-ground, prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence, adjoining to Lichfield. Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself without any apology; I wondered at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate; I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted; but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend, instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his handwriting: —

"Mrs. Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr. Boswell's company to dinner at two."

I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof how amiable his character was in the opinion of those who knew him best. I was not informed, till afterwards, that Mrs. Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford-upon Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with gothic barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree (1), and, as Dr. Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, on the same authority, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts of our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner Dr. Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs. Thrale, on the death of her son:—

LETTER 244. TO MRS THRALE

"Lichfield, March 25. 1776.

"DEAR MADAM,—This letter will not, I hope, reach you many days before me; in a distress which can be so little relieved, nothing remains for a friend but to come and partake it.

"Poor, dear, sweet, little boy! When I read the letter this day to Mrs. Aston, she said, 'Such a death is the next to translation.' Yet, however I may convince myself of this, the tears are in my eyes, and yet I could not love him as you loved him, nor reckon upon him for a future comfort as you and his father reckoned upon him.

"He is gone, and we are going! We could not

(1) See an accurate and animated statement of Mr. Gastrel's barbarity, by Mr. Malone, in a note on "Some Account of the Life of William Shakspeare," prefixed to his admirable edition of that poet's works, vol. i. p. 118.

have enjoyed him long, and shall not long be separated from him. He has probably escaped many such pangs as you are now feeling.

"Nothing remains, but that with humble confidence we resign ourselves to Almighty Goodness, and fall down, without irreverent murmurs, before the Sovereign Distributor of Good and Evil, with hope that though sorrow endureth for a night, yet joy may come in the morning.

"I have known you, Madam, too long to think that you want any arguments for submission to the Supreme Will, nor can my consolation have any effect, but that of showing that I wish to comfort you. What can be done you must do for yourself. Remember, first, that your child is happy; and then, that he is safe, not only from the ills of this world, but from those more formidable dangers which extend their mischief to eternity. You have brought into the world a rational being; have seen him happy during the little life that has been granted to him; and can have no doubt but that his happiness is now. * *

"When you have obtained by prayer such tranquillity as nature will admit, force your attention, as you can, upon your accustomed duties and accustomed entertainments. You can do no more for our dear boy, but you must not therefore think less on those whom your attention may make fitter for the place to which he is gone. I am, dearest, dearest Madam, your most affectionate humble servant, "SAM. JOHNSON."

I said this loss would be very distressing to Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, Thrale will forget it first. *She* has many things that she *may* think of. *He* has many things that he *must*

think of." This was a very just remark upon the different effects of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute, "It was said of Augustus, that it would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town-hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw "Theodosius," with "The Stratford Jubilee." I was happy to see Dr. Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I condemned myself for being so, when poor Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON. "You are wrong, Sir; twenty years hence Mr. and Mrs. Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, Sir, you are to consider, that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation, whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself."

Mr. Seward and Mr. Pearson ([1]), another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn, and after they left us, we sat up late as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt.

"Marriage, Sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman: for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying — the *mechanical* reason." BOSWELL. "Why, that *is* a strong one. But does not imagination make it much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; but it is a delusion that is always beginning again." BOSWELL. "I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion." JOHNSON. "I don't think so, Sir."

"Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

(1) This was the gentleman whose lady inherited Miss Porter's property, and has contributed so many of her manuscripts to this edition. It was to him that Miss Porter addressed, in the presence of Dr. Johnson, that two-edged reproof, which Dr. Johnson repeated to Mrs. Piozzi. Mr. Pearson having opposed Miss Porter in some argument, she was offended, and exclaimed, "Mr. Pearson, you are just like Dr. Johnson — you contradict every word one speaks." — *Piozzi*, p. 172. — C.

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation[1] among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."

"A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion."

"Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to a particular object. By doing so, Norton[2] has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be."

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on public worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women: maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule

(1) This very just observation explains why the conversation of princes, and of those who *ape* princes, consists of so large a proportion of *questions*. The *badauds* of all nations used to wonder at Buonaparte's active curiosity and desire of knowledge from the multitude of his questions, while in fact *he was only "playing at* KING."—C.

(2) Sir Fletcher Norton, afterward Speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1782 created Baron Grantly.—M.

for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON "Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety."

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties; for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other. Johnson, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this: "Why, Sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and which is not so large but they are all known. There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where, from its great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England may long remain unknown to each other."

On Tuesday, March 26., there came for us an equipage properly suited to a wealthy, well-beneficed clergyman: Dr. Taylor's large roomy post-chaise, drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postilions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne; where I found my friend's schoolfellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial creditable equipage: his house, garden, pleasure-ground, table, in short every thing good, and no scantiness appearing. Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely. Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up. I have seen many skeletons of show and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and good preferment in the

church, being a prebendary of Westminster, and rector of Bosworth. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal; and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me, he had the preceding winter distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family; for, though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality of any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me, "Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size, and figure, and countenance, and manner were that of a hearty English squire, with the parson super-induced: and I took particular notice of his upper-servant, Mr. Peters, a decent grave man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or *major-domo* of a bishop.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality; and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow, Congreve, that he had given to Mr. Hector; adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that it deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "*There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse.*" Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their

latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr. Taylor commended a physician [1] who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." JOHNSON. "But you should consider, Sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him; whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think, 'We'll send for Dr. [Butter] nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book [2] in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the public, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr. Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the judge. "For," said he, "either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly, his own consciousness will protect him; if he meant to do injustice, he will be glad to see the man who attacks him so much vexed."

Next day, as Dr. Johnson had acquainted Dr. Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr. Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

(1) Dr. Butter, who afterwards came to practise in London, and attended Johnson in his last illness. — C.

(2) Andrew Stuart's "Letters to Lord Mansfield on the Douglas Cause." — C.

Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of any thing. "Then, Sir," said I, "the savage is a wise man." "Sir," said he, "I do not mean simply being without, — but not having a want." I maintained, against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not *you*, Sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*." (1) I apologised by saying, I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.

Having left Ashbourne in the evening, we stopped to change horses at Derby, and availed ourselves of a moment to enjoy the conversation of my countryman, Dr. Butter, then physician there. He was in great indignation because Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia had been lost. Dr. Johnson was as violent against it. "I am glad," said he,

(1) The want seems, on this occasion, to have been common to *both*. — C.

"that parliament has had the spirit to throw it out. You wanted to take advantage of the timidity of our scoundrels" (meaning, I suppose, the ministry). It may be observed, that he used the epithet *scoundrel*, very commonly, not quite in the sense in which it is generally understood, but as a strong term of disapprobation (1); as when he abruptly answered Mrs. Thrale, who had asked him how he did, "Ready to become a scoundrel, Madam; with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal;" he meant, easy to become a capricious and self-indulgent valetudinarian; a character for which I have heard him express great disgust. (2)

Johnson had with him upon this jaunt "*Il Palmerino d' Inghilterra*," a romance praised by Cervantes; but did not like it much. He said, he read it for the language, by way of preparation for his

(1) "It is so very difficult," he said, on another occasion, to Mrs. Piozzi, "for a sick man not to be a scoundrel." He used to say that "a man was a *scoundrel* who was afraid of any thing" (see *post*, June 16. 1784); and it may be here observed, that *scoundrel* seems to have been a favourite word of his. In his Dictionary, he defined *knave*, a scoundrel; *loon*, a scoundrel; *lout*, a scoundrel; *poltroon*, a scoundrel; *sneakup*, a scoundrel; *rascal*, a scoundrel; and *scoundrel* itself he defines *a mean rascal, a low petty villain*. — C.

(2) Nothing more certainly offended Dr. Johnson than the idea of a man's mental faculties decaying by time. "It is not true, Sir," would he say: "what a man could once do, he would always do, unless, indeed, by dint of vicious indolence, and compliance with the nephews and nieces who crowd round an old fellow, and help to tuck him in, till he, contented with the exchange of fame for ease, e'en resolves to let them set the pillows at his back, and gives no farther proof of his existence than just to suck the jelly that prolongs it." — Piozzi.

Italian expedition. (1) We lay this night at Loughborough.

On Thursday, March 28., we pursued our journey. I mentioned that old Mr. Sheridan complained of the ingratitude of Mr. Wedderburne and General Fraser, who had been much obliged to him when they were young Scotchmen entering upon life in England. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him. A man, when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connexions. Then, Sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be: and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, every body knows of them." He placed this subject in a new light to me, and showed, that a man who has risen in the world must not be condemned too harshly for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them. It is, no doubt, to be wished, that a proper degree of attention should be shown by great men to their early friends. But if, either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not submit even to an exterior observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised

(1) [A translation of Palmerin was published by Mr. Southey in 1807.]

above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed. To one of the very fortunate persons whom I have mentioned, namely, Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, I must do the justice to relate, that I have been assured by another early acquaintance of his, old Mr. Macklin, who assisted in improving his pronunciation, that he found him very grateful. Macklin, I suppose, had not pressed upon his elevation with so much eagerness as the gentleman who complained of him. Dr. Johnson's remark as to the jealousy entertained of our friends who rise far above us is certainly very just. By this was withered the early friendship between Charles Townshend and Akenside (1); and many similar instances might be adduced.

He said, "It is commonly a weak man who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune; and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionably expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expenses. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the

(1) This is no appropriate instance. Charles Townshend — the grand-nephew of the Duke of Newcastle and of Mr. Pelham, both prime ministers — the grandson of a peer, who had married Sir Robert Walpole's sister, and was secretary of state, and leader of the House of Lords — was as much above Akenside in their earliest days, as at any subsequent period; nor was Akenside in rank inferior to Dr. Brocklesby, with whom Charles Townshend continued in intimate friendship to the end of his life. — C.

handling of money, spends it judiciously; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret. On the contrary, he was willing to speak favourably of his own age; and, indeed, maintained its superiority in every respect, except in its reverence for government; the relaxation of which he imputed, as its grand cause, to the shock which our monarchy received at the Revolution, though necessary; and, secondly, to the timid concessions made to faction by successive administrations in the reign of his present majesty. I am happy to think, that he lived to see the crown at last recover its just influence.

At Leicester we read in the newspaper that Dr. James was dead.(1) I thought that the death of an old schoolfellow, and one with whom he had lived a good deal in London, would have affected my fellow-traveller much: but he only said, "Ah! poor Jamy!" Afterwards, however, when we were in the chaise, he said, with more tenderness, "Since

(1) Dr. James died 23d March, 1776. — C.

I set out on this jaunt, I have lost an old friend and a young one; — Dr. James, and poor Harry" (meaning Mr. Thrale's son).

Having lain at St. Alban's on Thursday, March 28., we breakfasted the next morning at Barnet. I expressed to him a weakness of mind which I could not help; an uneasy apprehension that my wife and children, who were at a great distance from me, might, perhaps, be ill. "Sir," said he, "consider how foolish you would think it in *them* to be apprehensive that *you* are ill." This sudden turn relieved me for the moment; but I afterwards perceived it to be an ingenious fallacy. (1) I might, to be sure, be satisfied that they had no reason to be apprehensive about me, because I *knew* that I myself was well: but we might have a mutual anxiety, without the charge of folly; because each was, in some degree, uncertain as to the condition of the other.

I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. I experienced immediate happiness while whirled along with such a companion, and said to him, "Sir, you observed one day at General Oglethorpe's, that a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk. Will you not add — or when driving rapidly in a postchaise?" JOHNSON. "No,

(1) Surely it is no fallacy, but a sound and rational argument. He who is perfectly well, and apprehensive concerning the state of another at a distance from him, *knows* to a certainty that the fears of that person concerning *his* health are imaginary and delusive; and hence has a rational ground for supposing that his own apprehensions, concerning his absent wife or friend, are equally unfounded. — M

Sir, you are driving rapidly *from* something, or *to* something." (1)

Talking of melancholy, he said, "Some men, and very thinking men too, have not those vexing thoughts. (2) Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the year round. Beauclerk, except when ill and in pain, is the same. But I believe most men have them in the degree in which they are capable of having them. If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book; and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking."

We stopped at Messieurs Dillys, booksellers in the Poultry; from whence he hurried away, in a hackney coach, to Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. I called at his house in the evening, having promised

(1) Yet it was but a week before that he had said that "life had few things better than driving rapidly in a post-chaise." This is an instance of the justice of Mrs. Piozzi's observation, that "it was unlucky for those who delighted to echo Johnson's sentiments, that he would not endure from them *to-day* what he had *yesterday*, by his own manner of treating the subject, made them fond of repeating." — C.

(2) The phrase "vexing thoughts," is, I think, very expressive. It has been familiar to me from my childhood, for it is to be found in the "Psalms in Metre," used in the churches (I believe I should say *kirks*) of Scotland, Psal. xliii. v. 5.

"Why art thou then cast down my soul? what should discourage thee?
And why with *vexing thoughts* art thou disquieted in me?"

Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossession. But at a maturer period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms, I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland is, upon the whole, the best; and that it is vain to think of having a better. It has in general a simplicity and unction of sacred poesy; and in many parts its transfusion is admirable.

to acquaint Mrs. Williams of his safe return; when, to my surprise, I found him sitting with her at tea, and, as I thought, not in a very good humour: for, it seems, when he had got to Mr. Thrale's, he found the coach was at the door waiting to carry Mrs. and Miss Thrale, and Signor Baretti, their Italian master, to Bath. This was not showing the attention which might have been expected to the "guide, philosopher, and friend;" the *Imlac* who had hastened from the country to console a distressed mother, who he understood was very anxious for his return. They had, I found, without ceremony, proceeded on their journey. I was glad to understand from him that it was still resolved that his tour to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale should take place, of which he had entertained some doubt, on account of the loss which they had suffered; and his doubts afterwards appeared to be well founded. He observed, indeed, very justly, that "their loss was an additional reason for their going abroad; and if it had not been fixed that he should have been one of the party, he would force them out; but he would not advise them unless his advice was asked, lest they might suspect that he recommended what he wished on his own account." I was not pleased that his intimacy with Mr. Thrale's family, though it no doubt contributed much to his comfort and enjoyment, was not without some degree of restraint: not, as has been grossly suggested, that it was required of him as a task to talk for the entertainment of them and their company; but that he was not quite at his ease; which, however, might partly be

owing to his own honest pride — that dignity of mind which is always jealous of appearing too compliant.

On Sunday, March 31., I called on him and showed him, as a curiosity which I had discovered, his "Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia," which Sir John Pringle had lent me, it being then little known as one of his works. He said, "Take no notice of it," or "Don't talk of it." He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. I said to him, "Your style, Sir, is much improved since you translated this." He answered, with a sort of triumphant smile, "Sir, I hope it is."

On Wednesday, April 3., in the morning, I found him very busy putting his books in order, and, as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves, such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

I gave him an account of a conversation which had passed between me and Captain Cook, the day before, at dinner at Sir John Pringle's; and he was much pleased with the conscientious accuracy of that celebrated circumnavigator, who set me right as to many of the exaggerated accounts given by Dr. Hawkesworth of his Voyages. I told him that while I was with the captain I catched the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man *does* feel so, till he

considers how very little he can learn from such voyages." BOSWELL. "But one is carried away with the general, grand, and indistinct notion of A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but a man is to guard himself against taking a thing in general." I said I was certain that a great part of what we are told by the travellers to the South Sea must be conjecture, because they had not enough of the language of those countries to understand so much as they have related. Objects falling under the observation of the senses might be clearly known; but every thing intellectual, every thing abstract — politics, morals, and religion, must be darkly guessed. Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. He upon another occasion, when a friend mentioned to him several extraordinary facts, as communicated to him by the circumnavigators, slily observed, "Sir, I never before knew how much I was respected by these gentlemen; they told me none of these things."

He had been in company with Omai, a native of one of the South Sea Islands, after he had been some time in this country. He was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: "Sir, he had passed his time, while in England, only in the best company; so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel. As a proof of this, Sir, Lord Mulgrave and he dined one day at Streatham; they sat with their backs to the light fronting me, so that I could not see distinctly; and there was so little of the savage in Omai, that

I was afraid to speak to either, lest I should mistake one for the other." (1)

We agreed to dine to-day at the Mitre tavern, after the rising of the House of Lords, where a branch of the litigation concerning the Douglas estate, in which I was one of the counsel, was to come on. I brought with me Mr. Murray, solicitor-general of Scotland, now one of the judges of the court of session, with the title of Lord Henderland. I mentioned Mr. Solicitor's relation, Lord Charles Hay (2), with whom I knew Dr. Johnson had been acquainted. Johnson. "I wrote something for Lord Charles, and I thought he had nothing to fear from a court-martial. I suffered a great loss when he died; he was a mighty pleasing man in conversation, and a reading man. The character of a soldier is high. They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind. An officer is much more respected than any other man who has little money. In a commercial country, money will always purchase respect. But you find, an officer, who has, properly

(1) This might perhaps have been more justly attributed to the defect of his sight (see *antè*, p. 20. n.) than to any resemblance between Omai and Lord Mulgrave. — C.

(2) Third son of the third Marquis of Tweedale. He distinguished himself at the battle of Fontenoy; where he is said to have been the officer who *invited* the French guards to fire. He was afterwards third in command under Lord Loudon and General Hopson, in an expedition against Canada; but expressing himself with some violence against the tardiness of his superiors, he was, on the 31st July, 1757, put under arrest and sent to England, to be tried by a court-martial, which, however, did not assemble till Feb. 1760; but Lord Charles died on the 1st of May following, before the sentence was promulgated. — C.

speaking, no money, is every where well received and treated with attention. The character of a soldier always stands him in stead." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, I think that common soldiers are worse thought of than other men in the same rank of life; such as labourers." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a common soldier is usually a very gross man, and any quality which procures respect may be overwhelmed by grossness. A man of learning may be so vicious or so ridiculous that you cannot respect him. A common soldier, too, generally eats more than he can pay for. But when a common soldier is civil in his quarters, his red coat procures him a degree of respect." The peculiar respect paid to the military character in France was mentioned. BOSWELL. "I should think that where military men are so numerous, they would be less valuable as not being rare." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, wherever a particular character or profession is high in the estimation of a people, those who are of it will be valued above other men. We value an Englishman high in this country, and yet Englishmen are not rare in it."

Mr. Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candour and good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON. "Sir, they disputed with good humour, because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with

good humour upon their fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them: when a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. Accordingly you see, in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoic, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. (1) Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value, is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believed in revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question; because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact." MURRAY. "It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to be sure, when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him

(1) This might allude to the pleadings for and against *Pleasure* in Lucian's *Dicasteria*, where the Stoic, being defeated by Epicurus in the court below, appeals to Jupiter, but there seems no loss of temper. *See Lucian*, ed. 1615, p. 756. Or perhaps the squabble between the disputants at the end of *Jupiter the Tragic* may have been meant. — C.

down first, and pity him afterwards. No, Sir, every man will dispute with great good humour upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of another man's son being hanged; but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in a very good humour with him." I added this illustration, "If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I place great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY. "But, Sir, truth will always bear an examination." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, Sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week."

We talked of education at great schools; the advantages and disadvantages of which Johnson displayed in a luminous manner; but his arguments preponderated so much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them [1], that I have reason to believe Mr. Murray

(1) A peculiar advantage of an education in our public schools was stated in one of his parliamentary speeches, by the late Mr. Canning — himself a great authority and example on such a subject. "Foreigners often ask, 'By what means an uninterrupted succession of men, qualified more or less eminently for the performance of united parliamentary and official duties, is secured?' First, I answer (with the prejudices, perhaps, of Eton and Oxford), that we owe it to our system of public schools and universities. From these institutions is derived (in the language of the prayer of our collegiate churches) '*a due supply of men fitted to serve their country both in church and state.*' It is in her

was very much influenced by what he had heard to-day in his determination to send his own son to Westminster school. I have acted in the same manner with regard to my own two sons; having placed the eldest at Eton, and the second at Westminster. I cannot say which is best. But in justice to both those noble seminaries, I with high satisfaction declare, that my boys have derived from them a great deal of good, and no evil: and I trust they will, like Horace, be grateful to their father for giving them so valuable an education.

I introduced the topic which is often ignorantly urged, that the Universities of England are too rich (1); so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do, if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income. JOHNSON. "Sir, the very reverse of this is the truth; the English universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit

public schools and universities that the youth of England are, by a discipline which shallow judgments have sometimes attempted to undervalue, prepared for the duties of public life. There are rare and splendid exceptions, to be sure; but in my conscience I believe, that England would not be what she is without her system of public education, and that no other country can become what England is without the advantages of such a system." Such was also Mr. Gibbon's opinion. "I shall always be ready to join in the public opinion, that our public schools, which have produced so many eminent characters, are the best adapted to the genius and constitution of the English people."—*Memoirs. Misc. Works*, vol. i. p. 37.—C.

(1) Dr. Adam Smith, who was for some time a professor in the university of Glasgow, has uttered, in his "Wealth of Nations," some reflections upon this subject which are certainly not well founded, and seem to be invidious.

him for the world, and accordingly in general they are held no longer than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a fellow who grows old in his college; but this is against his will, unless he be a man very indolent indeed. A hundred a-year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently as a scholar. We do not allow our fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor, that a fellow can obtain any thing more than a livelihood. To be sure, a man who has enough without teaching will probably not teach; for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner, a man who is to get nothing by teaching will not exert himself. Gresham college was intended as a place of instruction for London; able professors were to read lectures gratis; they contrived to have no scholars; whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but sixpence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Every body will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach to have scholars; and this is the case in our universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true; for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning with them for his life. In the foreign universities a professorship is a high thing. It is as much almost as a man can make by his learning: and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the universities. It is not so with us. Our uni-

versities are impoverished of learning, by the penury of their provisions. I wish there were many places of a thousand a-year at Oxford, to keep first-rate men of learning from quitting the university." Undoubtedly, if this were the case, literature would have a still greater dignity and splendour at Oxford, and there would be grander living sources of instruction.

I mentioned Mr. Maclaurin's uneasiness on account of a degree of ridicule carelessly thrown on his deceased father, in Goldsmith's "History of Animated Nature," in which that celebrated mathematician is represented as being subject to fits of yawning so violent as to render him incapable of proceeding in his lecture, a story altogether unfounded, but for the publication of which the law would give no reparation. (1) This led us to agitate the question, whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication. Mr. Murray maintained there should be reparation, unless the author could justify himself by proving the fact. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told, than that individuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to

(1) Dr. Goldsmith was dead before Mr. Maclaurin discovered the ludicrous error. But Mr. Nourse, the bookseller, who was the proprietor of the work, upon being applied to by Sir John Pringle, agreed very handsomely to have the leaf on which it was contained cancelled, and reprinted without it, at his own expense.

a man who is calumniated in his lifetime, because he may be hurt in his worldly interest, or at least hurt in his mind; but the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice. Let him deny what is said, and let the matter have a fair chance by discussion. But if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written; for a great deal is known of men of which proof cannot be brought. A minister may be notoriously known to take bribes, and yet you may not be able to prove it." Mr. Murray suggested that the author should be obliged to show some sort of evidence, though he would not require a strict legal proof; but Johnson firmly and resolutely opposed any restraint whatever, as adverse to a free investigation of the characters of mankind.(1)

(1) What Dr. Johnson has here said is undoubtedly good sense; yet I am afraid that law, though defined by *Lord Coke* "the perfection of reason," is not altogether *with him*: for it is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man, may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is, however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect. In the King's Bench, Trinity term, 1790, the question occurred on occasion of an indictment, *the King* v. *Topham*, who, as a *proprietor* of a newspaper entitled "The World," was found guilty of a libel against Earl Cowper, deceased, because certain injurious charges against his lordship were published in that paper. An arrest of judgment having been moved for, the case was afterwards solemnly argued. My friend, Mr. Const, whom I delight in having an opportunity to praise, not only for his abilities but his manners — a gentleman whose ancient German blood has been mellowed in England, and who may truly be said to unite the *baron* and the *barrister*, was one of the Counsel for Mr. Topham. He displayed much learning and ingenuity upon the general question; which, however, was not decided, as the court granted an arrest chiefly on the informality of the indictment. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England than I have; but with all deference

I cannot help thinking, that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless juries, whom I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, resolutely interpose. Of late an act of parliament has passed declaratory of their full right to one as well as the other, in matter of libel; and the bill having been brought in by a popular gentleman, many of his party have in most extravagant terms declaimed on the wonderful acquisition to the liberty of the press. For my own part I ever was clearly of opinion that this right was inherent in the very constitution of a jury, and indeed in sense and reason inseparable from their important function. To establish it, therefore, by statute, is, I think, narrowing its foundation, which is the broad and deep basis of common law. Would it not rather weaken the right of primogeniture, or any other old and universally acknowledged right, should the legislature pass an act in favour of it? In my "Letter to the People of Scotland, against diminishing the number of the Lords of Session," published in 1785, there is the following passage, which, as a concise, and I hope a fair and rational state of the matter, I presume to quote "The juries of England are judges of *law* as well as of *fact* in *many civil* and in *all criminal* trials. That my principles of *resistance* may not be misapprehended, any more than my principles of *submission*, I protest that I should be the last man in the world to encourage juries to contradict rashly, wantonly, or perversely, the opinion of the judges. On the contrary, I would have them listen respectfully to the advice they receive from the bench, by which they may often be well directed in forming *their own opinion*, which, 'and *not another's*,' is the opinion they are to return *upon their oaths*. But where, after due attention to all that the judge has said, they are decidedly of a different opinion from him, they have not only a *power* and a *right*, but they are *bound in conscience* to bring in a verdict accordingly."

CHAPTER V.

1776.

Popish Corruptions.—Licensed Stews.—Seduction.—"Jack Ellis."—Gaming.—Card-playing.—Conjugal Obligations.—Law of Usury.—Beggars.—Dr. Cheyne—Solitude.—Joseph Simpson.—Children.—Cowley.—Flatman's Poems.—Cibber's "Lives."—Gray.—Akenside.—Mason.—The Reviews.—Lord Lyttelton.—"The Spectator."—Dr. Barry.—Dinner at General Paoli's.—"Abel Drugger."—Italy.—The Mediterranean.—Poetical Translation.—Art of Printing.—Education of the People.—Thomson.—"Hudibras."—Purpose of Tragedy.—"Othello."—John Dennis.—Swearing.—Wine-drinking.—Cumberland's "Odes."—Savage Life.

ON Thursday, 4th April, having called on Dr. Johnson, I said, it was a pity that truth was not so firm as to bid defiance to all attacks, so that it might be shot at as much as people chose to attempt, and yet remain unhurt. JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, it would not be shot at. Nobody attempts to dispute that two and two make four: but with contests concerning moral truth, human passions are generally mixed, and therefore it must be ever liable to assault and misrepresentation."

On Friday, 5th April, being Good Friday, after having attended the morning service at St. Clement's church, I walked home with Johnson. We

talked of the Roman Catholic religion. JOHNSON. "In the barbarous ages, Sir, priests and people were equally deceived; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgences to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted."* He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome. BOSWELL. "So then, Sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes?" JOHNSON. "To be sure I would not, Sir. I would punish it much more than it is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft; but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, Sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, Sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage."

I stated to him this case:—"Suppose a man has a daughter, who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world, should he keep her in his house? Would he not, by doing so, be accessary to imposition? And, perhaps, a worthy, unsuspecting man, might come and marry this woman, unless the father inform him of the truth." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is accessary to no im-

position. His daughter is in his house; and if a man courts her, he takes his chance. If a friend, or indeed, if any man, asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he ought to advise him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider the state of life is this; we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can; and a man is not bound in honesty or honour to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his friend's daughter is not obliged to say to every body — 'Take care of me; don't let me into your house without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter. I may debauch yours.'"

Mr. Thrale called upon him, and appeared to bear the loss of his son with a manly composure. There was no affectation about him; and he talked, as usual, upon indifferent subjects. He seemed to me to hesitate as to the intended Italian tour, on which, I flattered myself, he and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson were soon to set out; and, therefore, I pressed it as much as I could. I mentioned that Mr. Beauclerk had said, that Baretti, whom they were to carry with them, would keep them so long in the little towns of his own district, that they would not have time to see Rome. I mentioned this to put them on their guard. JOHNSON. "Sir, we do not thank Mr. Beauclerk for supposing that we are to be directed by Baretti. No, Sir; Mr. Thrale is to go, by

my advice, to Mr. Jackson (1) (the all-knowing), and get from him a plan for seeing the most that can be seen in the time that we have to travel. We must, to be sure, see Rome, Naples, Florence, and Venice, and as much more as we can." (Speaking with a tone of animation.)

When I expressed an earnest wish for his remarks on Italy, he said, "I do not see that I could make a book upon Italy; yet I should be glad to get two hundred pounds, or five hundred pounds, by such a work." This showed both that a journal of his tour upon the continent was not wholly out of his contemplation, and that he uniformly adhered to that strange opinion which his indolent disposition made him utter; "No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money." Numerous instances to refute this will occur to all who are versed in the history of literature.

He gave us one of the many sketches of character which were treasured in his mind, and which he was wont to produce quite unexpectedly in a very entertaining manner. "I lately," said he, "received a letter from the East Indies, from a gentleman (2)

(1) A gentleman who, from his extraordinary stores of knowledge, has been styled *omniscient*. Johnson, I think very properly, altered it to *all-knowing*, as it is a *verbum solenne*, appropriated to the Supreme Being. — B. — Mr. Richard Jackson, a barrister, M.P. for New Romney, and F.R.S., had obtained, from the universality of his information on all topics, the appellation of "*omniscient Jackson*." He was an intimate friend of Lord Shelburn's, and became a lord of the treasury in his lordship's administration in 1782. He died May 6. 1787. — C.

(2) This gentleman was no doubt Mr. Joseph Fowke. See *post*, p. 140, and April 19. 1783. — C.

whom I formerly knew very well; he had returned from that country with a handsome fortune, as it was reckoned, before means were found to acquire those immense sums which have been brought from thence of late: he was a scholar, and an agreeable man, and lived very prettily in London, till his wife died. After her death, he took to dissipation and gaming, and lost all he had. One evening he lost a thousand pounds to a gentleman whose name I am sorry I have forgotten. Next morning he sent the gentleman five hundred pounds, with an apology that it was all he had in the world. The gentleman sent the money back to him, declaring he would not accept of it; and adding, that if Mr. —— had occasion for five hundred pounds more, he would lend it to him. He resolved to go out again to the East Indies, and make his fortune anew. He got a considerable appointment, and I had some intention of accompanying him. Had I thought then as I do now, I should have gone: but at that time I had objections to quitting England."

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong yet nice portraits which he often drew. I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonnée* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction

and entertainment. The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation was not less pleasing than surprising. I remember he once observed to me, "It is wonderful, Sir, what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener, behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week." (1)

Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot; and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote "The Polite Philosopher," and of the awkward and un-

(1) This Mr. Ellis was, I believe, the last of that profession called *scriveners*, which is one of the London companies, but of which the business is no longer carried on separately, but is transacted by attorneys and others. He was a man of literature and talents. He was the author of a Hudibrastic version of Maphæus's Canto, in addition to the Æneid; of some poems in Dodsley's collection, and various other small pieces; but, being a very modest man, never put his name to any thing. He showed me a translation which he had made of Ovid's Epistles, very prettily done. There is a good engraved portrait of him by Pether, from a picture by Fry, which hangs in the hall of the Scriveners' company. I visited him October 4. 1790, in his ninety-third year, and found his judgment distinct and clear, and his memory, though faded so as to fail him occasionally, yet, as he assured me, and I indeed perceived, able to serve him very well, after a little recollection. It was agreeable to observe, that he was free from the discontent and fretfulness which too often molest old age. He, in the summer of that year, walked to Rotherhithe, where he dined, and walked home in the evening. He died Dec. 31. 1791.

couth Robert Levet; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr. Sastres, the Italian master; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven (1), and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner, the tallow-chandler, on Snow-hill. (2)

On my expressing my wonder at his discovering so much of the knowledge peculiar to different professions, he told me, "I learnt what I know of law chiefly from Mr. Ballow (3), a very able man. I learnt some too from Chambers; but was not so teachable then. One is not willing to be taught by

(1) Lord Macartney, who, with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for an elegant pleasantry, told me that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference. "So," said his lordship, smiling, "*I kept back.*"

(2) This is much exaggerated (see *ante*, Vol. III. p. 187. n.). His polite acquaintance did not extend much beyond the circle of Mr. Thrale, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the members of the Club. There is no record that I recollect, of his having dined at the table of any peer in London (Lord Lucan, an Irish peer, is hardly an exception): he seems scarcely to have known an *English* bishop, except Dr. Shipley, whom every one knew, and Bishop Porteus; and except by a few occasional visits at the *bas-bleus* assemblies of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey, we do not trace him in any thing like fashionable society. This seems strange to us; for happily, in our day, a literary man of much less than Johnson's eminence would be courted into the highest and most brilliant ranks of society. Lord Wellesley recollects, with regret, the little notice, compared with his posthumous reputation, which the *fashionable* world seemed to take of Johnson. He was known as a great writer; but his social and conversational powers were not so generally appreciated. — C.

(3) There is an account of him in Sir John Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 244. Mr. Thomas Ballow was author of an excellent Treatise of Equity, printed anonymously in 1742, and lately republished, with very valuable additions, by John Fonblanque, esq. Mr. Ballow died suddenly in London, July 26. 1782, aged seventy-five, and is mentioned in the Gentleman's Magazine for that year as "a great Greek scholar, and famous for his knowledge of the old philosophy." — M.

a young man." When I expressed a wish to know more about Mr. Ballow, Johnson said, "Sir, I have seen him but once these twenty years. The tide of life has driven us different ways." I was sorry at the time to hear this; but whoever quits the creeks of private connections, and fairly gets into the great ocean of London, will, by imperceptible degrees, unavoidably experience such cessations of acquaintance.

"My knowledge of physic," he added, "I learnt from Dr. James, whom I helped in writing the proposals for his Dictionary, and also a little in the Dictionary itself. (1) I also learnt from Dr. Lawrence, but was then grown more stubborn."

A curious incident happened to day, while Mr. Thrale and I sat with him. Francis announced that a large packet was brought to him from the post-office, said to have come from Lisbon, and it was charged *seven pounds ten shillings*. He would not receive it, supposing it to be some trick, nor did he even look at it. But upon inquiry afterwards he found that it was a real packet for him, from that very friend in the East Indies of whom he had been speaking; and the ship which carried it having come to Portugal, this packet with others had been put into the post-office at Lisbon.

I mentioned a new gaming club, of which Mr. Beauclerk had given me an account, where the members played to a desperate extent. (2) Johnson

(1) I have in vain endeavoured to find out what parts Johnson wrote for Dr. James; perhaps medical men may.

(2) Lord Lauderdale informed me that Mr. Fox (a great

SON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is mere talk. *Who* is ruined by gaming? You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play; whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it." THRALE. "There may be few absolutely ruined by deep play; but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and so are very many by other kinds of expense." I had heard him talk once before in the same manner; and at Oxford, he said "he wished he had learned to play at cards.(1) The truth, however, is, that he loved to display his ingenuity in argument; and therefore would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reasoning and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin thus: "Why Sir, as to the good or evil of card playing—" "Now," said Garrick, "he is thinking which side he shall take." He appeared to have a pleasure in contradiction, especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an air of confidence; so that there was hardly any topic, if not one of the great truths of religion and morality, that he might not have been incited to argue, either for or against.

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authority on this as well as on more important subjects) told him, that the deepest play he had ever known was between the year 1772 and the beginning of the American war. Lord Lauderdale instanced 5000*l.* being staked on a single card at faro.—C.

(1) See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 157.

Lord Elibank(1) had the highest admiration of his powers. He once observed to me, "Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will not say that he convinces me; but he never fails to show me, that he had good reasons for it." I have heard Johnson pay his lordship this high compliment: "I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something."

We sat together till it was too late for the afternoon service. Thrale said, he had come with intention to go to church with us. We went at seven to evening prayers at St. Clement's church, after having drunk coffee; an indulgence which I understand Johnson yielded to on this occasion, in compliment to Thrale.(2)

On Sunday, April 7., Easter-day, after having been at St. Paul's cathedral, I came to Dr. Johnson, according to my usual custom. It seemed to me, that there was always something particularly mild and placid in his manner upon this holy festival, the commemoration of the most joyful event in the history of our world, the resurrection of our Lord

(1) Patrick Lord Elibank, who died in 1778 (See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 161.).

(2) This day he himself thus records: — "Though for the past week I have had an anxious design of communicating to-day, I performed no particular act of devotion, till on Friday I went to church. I fasted, though less rigorously than at other times. I, by negligence, poured milk into the tea, and, in the afternoon, drank one dish of coffee with Thrale; yet at night, after a fit of drowsiness, I felt myself very much disordered by emptiness, and called for tea, with peevish and impatient eagerness. My distress was very great." — *Pr. and Med.* p. 145. — C.

and Saviour, who, having triumphed over death and the grave, proclaimed immortality to mankind.(1)

I repeated to him an argument of a lady of my acquaintance, who maintained, that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal. JOHNSON. "This is miserable stuff, Sir. To the contract of marriage, besides the man and wife, there is a third party — society; and if it be considered as a vow — God: and, therefore, it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for men in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband; but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. A man may be unhappy, because he is not so rich as another; but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved; she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know,

(1) Yet with what different colours he paints his own state at this moment! — "The time is again [come] at which, since the death of my poor dear Tetty, on whom God have mercy, I have annually commemorated the mystery of redemption, and annually purposed to amend my life. My reigning sin, to which perhaps many others are appendant, is waste of time, and general sluggishness, to which I was always inclined, and, in part of my life, have been almost compelled by morbid melancholy and disturbance of mind. Melancholy has had in me its paroxysms and remissions, but I have not improved the intervals, nor sufficiently resisted my natural inclination, or sickly habits." He adds, however "In the morning I had at church some radiations of comfort." — *Pr. and Med.* p. 145. — C.

sir, what Macrobius has told of Julia.(1) JOHNSON. "This lady of yours, Sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel."

Mr. Macbean, author of the "Dictionary of Ancient Geography," came in. He mentioned that he had been forty years absent from Scotland. "Ah, Boswell!" said Johnson smiling, "what would you give to be forty years from Scotland?" I said, "I should not like to be so long absent from the seat of my ancestors." This gentleman, Mrs. Williams, and Mr. Levett, dined with us.

Dr. Johnson made a remark, which both Mr. Macbean and I thought new. It was this: that "the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as debtors; for if there were no such check, people would be apt, from the temptation of great interest, to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly, there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their fortunes for high annuities, which, after a few years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

Mrs. Williams was very peevish (2); and I wondered at Johnson's patience with her now, as I had often done on similar occasions. The truth is, that his humane consideration of the forlorn and indigent

(1) "Nunquam enim nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem."—Lib. ii. c. vi.

(2) Boswell was not partial to Mrs. Williams. Peevish she probably was: but let it be remembered that she was old, blind, poor, and a dependent. And see *antè*, Vol. I. p. 274., a more favourable account from Malone and Miss Hawkins.—C.

state in which this lady was left by her father induced him to treat her with the utmost tenderness, and even to be desirous of procuring her amusement, so as sometimes to incommode many of his friends, by carrying her with him to their houses, where, from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.

After coffee, we went to afternoon service in St. Clement's church. Observing some beggars in the street as we walked along, I said to him, I supposed there was no civilised country in the world where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented. JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, there is not; but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality."

When the service was ended, I went home with him, and we sat quietly by ourselves. He recommended Dr. Cheyne's books. I said, I thought Cheyne had been reckoned whimsical. "So he was," said he, "in some things; but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objection or other may not be made." He added, "I would not have you read any thing else of Cheyne, but his book on Health, and his 'English Malady.'"

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness? JOHNSON. "No, Sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only mad-

ness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgencies."

On Wednesday, 10th April, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where were Mr. Murphy and some other company. Before dinner, Dr. Johnson and I passed some time by ourselves. I was sorry to find it was now resolved that the proposed journey to Italy should not take place this year. He said, "I am disappointed, to be sure; but it is not a great disappointment." I wondered to see him bear, with a philosophical calmness, what would have made most people peevish and fretful. (1) I perceived that he had so warmly cherished the hope of enjoying classical scenes, that he could not easily part with the scheme; for he said, "I shall probably contrive to get to Italy some other way. (2) But I won't mention it to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, as it might vex them." I suggested that going to Italy might have done Mr. and Mrs. Thrale good. JOHNSON. "I rather believe not, Sir. While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait

(1) That he cordially assented to the reasons which operated on the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale to postpone the journey, appears from his letter to the lady: — 'April 9. 1776. Mr. Thrale's alteration of purpose is not weakness of resolution; it is a wise man's compliance with the change of things, and with the new duties which the change produces. Whoever expects me to be angry will be disappointed. I do not even grieve at the effect; I only grieve for the cause.'" His desire, however, to go abroad was, says Mrs. Piozzi, "very great; and he had a longing wish, too, to leave some Latin verses at the Grand Chartreux." — C.

(2) He probably may have had some idea of accompanying his friend Mr. Saunders Welsh, who went to Italy in the May of this year. See *post*, Feb. 1778. — C.

till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it."

At dinner, Mr. Murphy entertained us with the history of Mr. Joseph Simpson (1), a schoolfellow of Dr. Johnson's, a barrister at law, of good parts, but who fell into a dissipated course of life, incompatible with that success in his profession which he once had, and would otherwise have deservedly maintained; yet he still preserved a dignity in his deportment. He wrote a tragedy on the story of Leonidas, entitled "The Patriot." He read it to a company of lawyers, who found so many faults that he wrote it over again: so then there were two tragedies on the same subject and with the same title. Dr. Johnson told us, that one of them was still in his possession. This very piece was, after his death, published by some person who had been about him, and, for the sake of a little hasty profit, was fallaciously advertised so as to make it be believed to have been written by Johnson himself.

I said, I disliked the custom which some people had of bringing their children into company, because it in a manner forced us to pay foolish compliments to please their parents. JOHNSON. "You are right, Sir. We may be excused for not caring much about other people's children, for there are many who care very little about their own children. It may be observed, that men who, from being engaged in busi-

(1) See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 109., his letter to this gentleman, the author of "Reflections on the Endowments required for the Study of the Law;" a work of some merit, and which passed through several editions. — C.

ness, or from their course of life in whatever way, seldom see their children, do not care much about them. I myself should not have had much fondness for a child of my own." MRS. THRALE. "Nay, Sir, how can you talk so?" JOHNSON. "At least, I never wished to have a child." (1)

Mr. Murphy mentioned Dr. Johnson's having a design to publish an edition of Cowley. Johnson said, he did not know but he should; and he expressed his disapprobation of Dr. Hurd, for having published a mutilated edition under the title of "Select Works of Abraham Cowley." Mr. Murphy thought it a bad precedent; observing, that any author might be used in the same manner, and that it was pleasing to see the variety of an author's compositions at different periods.

We talked of Flatman's Poems; and Mrs. Thrale observed, that Pope had partly borrowed from him "The Dying Christian to his Soul." Johnson repeated Rochester's verses upon Flatman (2), which I think by much too severe:—

(1) I was once relating to him how Dr. Collier (of the Commons) observed, that the love one bore to children was from the anticipation one's mind made while one contemplated them: "We hope," says he, "that they will some time make wise men, or amiable women; and we suffer them to take up our affection beforehand. One cannot love *lumps of flesh*, and little infants are nothing more." "On the contrary," says Johnson, "one can scarcely help wishing, while one fondles a baby, that it may never live to become a man; for it is so probable that when he becomes a man, he should be sure to end in a scoundrel." Girls were less displeasing to him; "for as their temptations were fewer," he said, "their virtue in this life, and happiness in the next, were less improbable; and he loved," he said, "to see a knot of little misses dearly." — PIOZZI.

(2) [Thomas Flatman was born about 1635, and died in 1688.

"Nor that slow drudge in swift Pindaric strains,
Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains,
And rides a jaded muse, whipt with loose reins."

I like to recollect all the passages that I heard Johnson repeat: it stamps a value on them.

He told us that the book entitled "The Lives of the Poets," by Mr. Cibber, was entirely compiled by Mr. Shiels (1), a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. "The booksellers," said he, "gave Theophilus Cibber, who was then in prison, ten guineas to allow Mr. Cibber to be put upon the title-page, as the author; by this, a double imposition was intended; in the first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all; and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber."

Mr. Murphy said, that "The Memoirs of Gray's Life set him much higher in his estimation than his poems did: for you there saw a man constantly at work in literature." Johnson acquiesced in this; but depreciated the book, I thought, very unreasonably. For he said, "I forced myself to read it, only because it was a common topic of conversation. I found it mighty dull; and, as to the style, it is fit for the second table." Why he thought so I was at a loss to conceive. He now gave it as his opinion,

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"He really excelled as an artist: a man must want ears for harmony that can admire his poetry, and even want eyes that can cease to admire his painting. One of his heads is worth a ream of his pindarics." — GRANGER, vol. iv. p. 54.]

(1) Here followed, in the former editions, a note containing a long extract from the Monthly Review for 1792, controverting the above assertion, which on account of its length, has now been thrown into the *Appendix*. See No. I. — C.

that "Akenside was a superior poet both to Gray and Mason."

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said, "I think them very impartial: I do not know an instance of partiality." He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the Monthly and Critical Reviews, in the conversation with which his Majesty had honoured him. (1) He expatiated a little more on them this evening. "The Monthly Reviewers," said he, "are not Deists; but they are Christians with as little Christianity as may be; and are for pulling down all establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for supporting the constitution both in church and state. The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through; but lay hold of a topic, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

He talked of Lord Lyttelton's extreme anxiety as an author; observing, that "he was thirty years in preparing his history, and that he employed a man to point it for him; as if (laughing) another man could point his sense better than himself (2)." Mr Murphy said, he understood his history was kept

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 25.]

(2) It may be doubted whether Johnson's dislike of Lord Lyttelton did not here lead him into an error. Persons not so habituated with the details of printing as he was may have been less expert at the use of these conventional signs. Lord Byron wrote to Mr. Murray: "Do you know any one who can *stop*? I mean *point*, *commas*, and so forth, for I am, I fear, a sad hand at your punctuation." — *Moore's Life of Byron*, vol. i. p. 417.

back several years for fear of Smollett. (1) JOHNSON. "This seems strange to Murphy and me, who never felt that anxiety, but sent what he wrote to the press, and let it take its chance." MRS. THRALE. "The time has been, Sir, when you felt it." JOHNSON. "Why really, Madam, I do not recollect a time when that was the case."

Talking of "The Spectator," he said, "It is wonderful that there is such a proportion of bad papers, in the half of the work which was not written by Addison; for there was all the world to write that half, yet not a half of that half is good. One of the finest pieces in the English language is the paper on Novelty [No. 626.], yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove (2), a dissenting *teacher*." He would not, I perceived, call him a *clergyman*, though he was candid enough to allow very great merit to his composition. Mr. Murphy said, he remembered when there were several people alive in London, who enjoyed a considerable reputation merely from having written a paper in "The Spectator." He mentioned particularly Mr. Ince, who used to frequent Tom's coffee-house. "But," said Johnson, "you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr. Ince." [No. 555.] He would not allow that the paper [No. 364.] on carrying a boy to travel, signed Philip Homebred, which was reported to be written by the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, had

(1) [Dr. Smollett was for some time editor of the Critical Review.]

(2) [Henry Grove was born at Taunton in 1683, and died in 1737. His posthumous works were published by subscription, in 4 vols. 8vo. in 1740.]

merit. He said, "it was quite vulgar, and had nothing luminous."

Johnson mentioned Dr. Barry's (1) System of Physic. "He was a man," said he, "who had acquired a high reputation in Dublin, came over to England, and brought his reputation with him, but had not great success. His notion was, that pulsation occasions death by attrition; and that, therefore, the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation. But we know that pulsation is strongest in infants, and that we increase in growth while it operates in its regular course; so it cannot be the cause of destruction." Soon after this, he said something very flattering to Mrs. Thrale, which I do not recollect; but it concluded with wishing her long life. "Sir," said I, "if Dr. Barry's system be true, you have now shortened Mrs. Thrale's life, perhaps some minutes, by accelerating her pulsation."

LETTER 245. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"*April* 11. 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM,—To have acted, with regard to you, in a manner either unfriendly or disrespectful, would give me great pain; and, I hope, will be always very contrary to my intention. That I staid away was merely accidental. I have seldom dined from home; and I did not think my opinion necessary to your information in any proprieties of behaviour. The poor parents of the child are much grieved, and much dejected. The journey to Italy is put off, but they go to Bath on Monday. A visit from you will be well taken,

(1) Sir Edward Barry, Baronet. — B. — He published, in 1775, a curious work on the Wines of the Ancients. — C.

and I think your intimacy is such that you may very properly pay it in a morning. I am sure that it will be thought seasonable and kind, and I wish you not to omit it. I am, dear Madam, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

On Thursday, April 11., I dined with him at General Paoli's, in whose house I now resided, and where I had ever afterwards the honour of being entertained with the kindest attention as his constant guest, while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there. I mentioned my having that morning introduced to Mr. Garrick, Count Neni, a Flemish nobleman of great rank and fortune, to whom Garrick talked of Abel Drugger as *a small part;* and related, with pleasant vanity, that a Frenchman, who had seen him in one of his low characters, exclaimed, "*Comment! je ne le crois pas. Ce n'est pas Monsieur Garrick, ce grand homme!*" Garrick added, with an appearance of grave recollection, "If I were to begin life again, I think I should not play those low characters." Upon which I observed, "Sir, you would be in the wrong, for your great excellence is your variety of playing, your representing so well characters so very different." JOHNSON. "Garrick, Sir, was not in earnest in what he said: for, to be sure, his peculiar excellence is his variety; and, perhaps, there is not any one character which has not been as well acted by somebody else, as he could do it." BOSWELL. "Why then, Sir, did he talk so?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to make you answer as you did." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir; he seemed to dip deep into his mind for the reflection." JOHNSON. "He had not

far to dip, Sir; he had said the same thing, probably, twenty times before."

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office, he said, "His parts, Sir, are pretty well for a lord; but would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said, "A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed, that "THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem."

We talked of translation. I said, I could not define it, nor could I think of a similitude to illustrate it; but that it appeared to me the translation of poetry could be only imitation. JOHNSON. "You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in

any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language."

A gentleman maintained that the art of printing had hurt real learning, by disseminating idle writings. JOHNSON. "Sir, if it had not been for the art of printing, we should now have no learning at all; for books would have perished faster than they could have been transcribed." This observation seems not just, considering for how many ages books were preserved by writing alone. (1)

The same gentleman maintained, that a general diffusion of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage; for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere. JOHNSON. "Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first; but we see when reading and writing have become general, the common people keep their stations. And so, were higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same."

"Goldsmith," he said, "referred every thing to vanity; his virtues and his vices too were from that motive. He was not a social man. He never exchanged mind with you." (2)

(1) The author did not recollect that of the books preserved (and an infinite number was lost) all were confined to two languages. In modern times and modern languages, France and Italy alone produce more books in a given time than Greece and Rome: put England, Spain, Germany, and the northern kingdoms out of the question.—BLAKEWAY.

(2) This seems not quite clear. Poor Goldsmith was, in the

We spent the evening at Mr. Hoole's. Mr. Mickle, the excellent translator of "The Lusiad," was there. I have preserved little of the conversation of this evening. Dr. Johnson said, "Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing every thing in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes, that the sense can hardly peep through. Shiels, who compiled 'Cibber's Lives of the Poets,' was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson, and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked, — Is not this fine? Shiels having expressed the highest admiration — 'Well, Sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every other line.'"

I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr. Robert Dodsley, one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762. Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a palace like Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," you had villages composed of very pretty houses; and he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." JOHNSON. "I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did; for he acknow-

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ordinary sense of the word, *social* and communicative *to a fault*. Dr. Johnson no doubt meant, that he was too much of an egotist, and too eager in conversation, to be a man of agreeable social habits; and although he had no reserve whatsoever, and opened whatever he had in his mind with the utmost confidence of indiscretion (see *passim*), yet never *exchanged* minds; that is, he never patiently *interchanged* opinions. — C.

ledged there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. 'Hudibras' has a profusion of these; yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. 'The Spleen,' in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry." BOSWELL. "Does not Gray's poetry, Sir, tower above the common mark?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but we must attend to the difference between what men in general cannot do if they would, and what every man may do if he would. Sixteen-string Jack (1) towered above the common mark." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, what is poetry?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all *know* what light is; but it is not easy to *tell* what it is." (2)

On Friday, April 12., I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr. Cradock (3), of Leicestershire, author of "Zobeide," a tragedy; a very pleasing gentleman, to whom my friend Dr. Farmer's very excellent Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare is addressed; and Dr. Harwood, who has written and published various works, par-

(1) A noted highwayman, who, after having been several times tried and acquitted, was at last hanged. He was remarkable for foppery in his dress, and particularly for wearing a bunch of sixteen strings at the knees of his breeches.

(2) Gray, he said, was the very Torré of poetry; he played his coruscations so speciously, that his steel dust is mistaken by many for a shower of gold.—HAWKINS.—Torré was a foreigner who, some years ago, exhibited a variety of splendid fire-works at Marybone Gardens. — C.

(3) Who has since published "Memoirs of his own Times," of which I have made occasional use. — C.

ticularly a fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist. (1)

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine, in his "Art of Poetry," of "καθαρσις των παθηματων, the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy. (2) "But how are the passions to be purged by terror and pity?" said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense. It is to expel impurities from the human body. The mind is subject to the same imperfection. The passions are the great movers of human actions; but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged or refined by means of terror and pity. For instance, ambition is a noble passion; but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion. In the same manner, a certain degree of resentment is necessary; but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion." My record upon this occasion does great injustice to

(1) He is more advantageously known by a work on the classics. — C.

(2) See an ingenious essay on this subject by the late Dr. Moor, Greek professor at Glasgow. — B. — See also a learned note on this passage of Aristotle, by Mr. Twining, in his admirable translation of the Poetics, in which the various explanations of other critics are considered, and in which Dr. Moor's essay is particularly discussed. — J. BOSWELL, jun.

Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr. Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"

I observed, the great defect of the tragedy of "Othello" was, that it had not a moral; for that no man could resist the circumstances of suspicion which were artfully suggested to Othello's mind. JOHNSON. "In the first place, Sir, we learn from Othello this very useful moral, not to make an unequal match; in the second place, we learn not to yield too readily to suspicion. The handkerchief is merely a trick, though a very pretty trick; but there are no other circumstances of reasonable suspicion, except what is related by Iago of Cassio's warm expressions concerning Desdemona in his sleep; and that depended entirely upon the assertion of one man. No, Sir, I think Othello has more moral than almost any play."

Talking of a penurious gentleman of our acquaintance, Johnson said, "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he would not much care if it should sour."

He said, he wished to see "John Dennis's Critical Works" collected. Davies said, they would not sell. Dr. Johnson seemed to think otherwise.

Davies said of a well-known dramatic author (1), that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar; having begun by attacking people, particularly the players."

(1) Sir James Mackintosh thought Cumberland was meant, I am now satisfied that it was Arthur Murphy. — C. 1835.

He reminded Dr. Johnson of Mr. Murphy's having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story. (1)

Johnson and I supped this evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Mr. Nairne, now one of the Scotch judges, with the title of Lord Dunsinan (2), and my very worthy friend, Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

We discussed the question, whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained, it did. JOHNSON. "No, Sir: before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous: but he is not improved: he is only not sensible of his defects." Sir Joshua said the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine; but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. "I am," said he, "in very good spirits, when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up: and I am sure

(1) When a man of some note was talking before him, and interlarding his stories with oaths, Johnson said, "Sir, all this swearing will do nothing for our story; I beg you will not swear." The narrator went on swearing: Johnson said, "I must again entreat you not to swear." He swore again; Johnson quitted the room. — HAWKINS.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 48. — C.

that moderate drinking makes people talk better." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; wine gives not light, gay, ideal, hilarity: but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken,— nay, drunken is a coarse word,—none of those *vinous* flights." SIR JOSHUA. "Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of those who were drinking." JOHNSON. "Perhaps, contempt. And, Sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced; and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure: cock-fighting or bear-baiting will raise the spirits of a company, as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking; as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are medlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general: and let it be considered, that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man." Sir William Forbes said, "Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer, which is made brisker by being set

before the fire." "Nay," said Johnson, laughing "I cannot answer that: that is too much for me."

I observed, that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds: but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking. JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine (1), I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits; in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me." (2)

He told us, "almost all his Ramblers were written just as they were wanted for the press; that he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and

(1) At one period of his life, however, he was reconciled to the bottle. Sweet wines were his chief favourites; when none of these were before him, he would sometimes drink port with a lump of sugar in every glass. The strongest liquors, and in very large quantities, produced no other effect on him than moderate exhilaration. Once, and but once, he is known to have had his dose, a circumstance which he himself discovered, on finding one of his sesquipedalian words hang fire; he then started up, and gravely observed, — I think it time we should go to bed. "After a ten years' forbearance of every fluid except tea and sherbet, I drank," said he, "one glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds, on the evening of the day on which he was knighted. I never swallowed another drop, till old Madeira was prescribed to me as a cordial during my present indisposition; but this liquor did not relish as formerly, and I therefore discontinued it." — HAWKINS.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 296., but I must observe, on the assertion made there by Mrs. PIOZZI, "that the paper on Procrastination was written in Sir Joshua Reynolds's parlour;"—that both she and Mr. Boswell appear to have been in error as to the date of the acquaintance between Sir Joshua and Dr. Johnson. See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 291. n. 2. "The Rambler" was ended before they could have been acquainted. — C.

wrote the remainder, while the former part of it was printing. When it was wanted, and he had fairly sat down to it, he was sure it would be done."

He said, that, for general improvement, a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to; though, to be sure, if a man has a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "What we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read." He told us, he read Fielding's "Amelia" through without stopping. (1) He said, "If a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may, perhaps, not feel again the inclination."

Sir Joshua mentioned Mr. Cumberland's "Odes," which were just published. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, they would have been thought as good as odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them; but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down every thing before

(1) We have here an involuntary testimony to the excellence of this admirable writer, to whom we have seen that Dr. Johnson *directly* allowed so little merit. — B. — Johnson appears to have been particularly pleased with the character of the heroine of this novel. "His attention to veracity," says Mrs. Piozzi, "was without equal or example;" and when I mentioned Clarissa as a perfect character, "On the contrary," said he, "you may observe there is always something which she prefers to truth." "Fielding's Amelia was the most pleasing heroine of all the romances," he said; "but that vile broken nose, never cured, ruined the sale of perhaps the only book, of which, being printed off (*published?*) betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night." — *Anecdotes*, p. 221. — M.

it. Nay, Cumberland has made his 'Odes' subsidiary to the fame of another man. ([1]) They might have run well enough by themselves; but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double."

We talked of the reviews. and Dr. Johnson spoke of them as he did at Thrale's. Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authors were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, those who write in them, write well, in order to be paid well."

LETTER 246. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"April 15. 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM, — When you called on Mrs. Thrale, I find by enquiry that she was really abroad. The same thing happened to Mrs Montagu, of which I beg you to inform her, for she went likewise by my opinion. The denial, if it had been feigned, would not have pleased me. Your visits, however, are kindly paid, and very kindly taken. We are going to Bath this morning: but I could not part without telling you the real state of your visit. — I am, dearest Madam, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Soon after this day, he went to Bath with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I had never seen that beautiful city, and wished to take the opportunity of visiting it while Johnson was there. Having written to him, I received the following answer: —

([1]) Mr. Romney, the painter, who has now deservedly established a high reputation.

LETTER 247. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR, — Why do you talk of neglect? When did I neglect you? If you will come to Bath, we shall all be glad to see you. Come therefore, as soon as you can. — But I have a little business for you at London. Bid Francis look in the paper drawer of the chest of drawers in my bed-chamber, for two cases; one for the attorney-general, and one for the solicitor-general. They lie, I think, at the top of my papers; otherwise they are somewhere else, and will give me more trouble.

"Please to write to me immediately, if they can be found. Make my compliments to all our friends round the world, and to Mrs. Williams at home. — I am, Sir, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Search for the papers as soon as you can, that, if it is necessary, I may write to you again before you come down."

On the 26th April, I went to Bath; and on my arrival at the Pelican inn, found lying for me an obliging invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by whom I was agreeably entertained almost constantly during my stay. They were gone to the rooms; but there was a kind note from Dr. Johnson, that he should sit at home all the evening. I went to him directly; and before Mr. and Mrs. Thrale returned, we had by ourselves some hours of tea-drinking and talk.

I shall group together such of his sayings as I preserved during the few days that I was at Bath.

Of a person (1) who differed from him in politics,

(1) Mr. Burke. — C.

he said, "In private life he is a very honest gentleman; but I will not allow him to be so in public life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong: that is, between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that [Burke] acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were. (1) They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, are criminal. They may be convinced; but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

It having been mentioned, I know not with what truth, that a certain female political writer (2), whose doctrines he disliked, had of late become very fond of dress, sat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge: JOHNSON. "She is better employed at her toilet, than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters."

He told us that "Addison wrote Budgell's papers in the Spectator, at least mended them so much that he made them almost his own; and that Draper, Tonson's partner, assured Mrs. Johnson, that the much admired Epilogue to 'The Distressed Mother,' which came out in Budgell's name, was in reality written by Addison."

(1) He means, that in earlier life, they, at the Club, knew that Burke was not what Johnson would call a Whig. Mr. Burke ended as he began —

"This sun of empire, where he rose, he set!" — C.

(2) Mrs. Macaulay. — C.

"The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation. The characteristic of our own government at present is imbecility. The magistrates dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged. The guards will not come for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries."

Of the father (1) of one of our friends he observed, 'He never clarified his notions, by filtrating them through other minds. He had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low. I dug the canal deeper," said he.

He told me that "so long ago as 1748, he had read 'The Grave,' a Poem (2), but did not like it much." I differed from him; for though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him; for the poem has passed through many editions, and is still much read by people of a serious cast of mind.

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as

(1) The elder Mr. Langton. — *Hawk. Mem.*

(2) I am sorry that there are no memoirs of the Rev. Robert Blair, the author of this poem. He was the representative of the ancient family of Blair of Blair, in Ayrshire; but the estate had descended to a female, and afterwards passed to the son of her husband by another marriage. He was minister of the parish of Athelstaneford, where Mr. John Home was his successor; so that it may truly be called classic ground. His son, who is of the same name, and a man eminent for talents and learning, is now, with universal approbation, solicitor-general of Scotland. — B. [A life of Blair is given in the editions of the English Poets by Anderson and Chalmers. He died in 1746, in his forty-seventh year.]

one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth;" and instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON. "I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence, as she does, from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jenyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, Sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive." (1)

He would not allow me to praise a lady (2) then at Bath; observing, "She does not gain upon me, Sir; I think her empty-headed." He was, indeed, a stern critic upon characters and manners. Even Mrs. Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends (3) could possibly spend as much

(1) The pension which Mrs. Montagu had lately settled on Miss Williams (see *ante*, p. 29.) would naturally account for this defence of that lady's beneficence, but it seems also to have induced Johnson to speak of her intellectual powers in a strain of panegyric as excessive as his former depreciation. Miss Reynolds relates, that she had heard him speak of Mrs. Montagu in terms of high admiration. "Sir," he would say, "that lady exerts more *mind* in conversation than any person I ever met with: Sir, she displays such powers of ratiocination — such radiations of intellectual excellence as are amazing!" — C.

(2) This has been supposed to be Miss Hannah More; yet it seems hard to conceive in what wayward fancy he could call her "empty-headed." — C. — I am glad to find, from Hannah More's Letters recently published, that my doubt was well founded. She was at this time in London, and could not have been the person meant. — C. 1835.

(3) Mr. Langton. — C.

money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us by a lively extravagant sally, on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said, "Nay, Madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly." JOHNSON. "With *your* wings, Madam, you *must* fly: but have a care, there are *clippers* abroad." (1) How very well was this said, and how fully has experience proved the truth of it! But have they not *clipped* rather *rudely*, and gone a great deal *closer* than was necessary? (2)

A gentleman expressed a wish to go and live three

(1) But though Dr. Johnson would, as Mrs. Piozzi has candidly confessed, treat her with occasional rudeness, he had a most sincere and tender regard for her, and no wonder; for she would, with great consideration and kindness, overlook his foibles and his asperities. One day, at her own table, he spoke so very roughly to her, that every one present was surprised that she could bear it so placidly; and on the ladies withdrawing, I expressed great astonishment that Dr. Johnson should speak so harshly to her, but to this she said no more than "*O, dear good man!*" This simple reply appeared so strong a proof of her generous and affectionate friendship, that I took the first opportunity of communicating it to Dr. Johnson, repeating her own animadversions which had produced it. He was much delighted with the information; and some time after, as he was lying back in his chair, seeming to be half asleep, but really, as it turned out, musing on this pleasing incident, he repeated, in a loud whisper, "O, dear good man!" This kind of soliloquy was a common habit of his, when any thing very flattering or very extraordinary engrossed his thoughts. — MISS REYNOLDS, *Recol.*

(2) This alludes to the many sarcastic observations published against Mrs. Piozzi, on her lamentable marriage, and particularly to Baretti's brutal strictures in the European Magazine for 1788; so brutal, that even Mr. Boswell, with all his enmity towards her, could not approve of them. — C.

years at Otaheité, or New Zealand, in order to obtain a full acquaintance with people so totally different from all that we have ever known, and be satisfied what pure nature can do for man. JOHNSON. "What could you learn, Sir? What can savages tell, but what they themselves have seen? Of the past or the invisible they can tell nothing. The inhabitants of Otaheité and New Zealand are not in a state of pure nature; for it is plain they broke off from some other people. Had they grown out of the ground, you might have judged of a state of pure nature. Fanciful people may talk of a mythology being amongst them; but it must be invention. They have once had religion, which has been gradually debased. And what account of their religion can you suppose to be learnt from savages? Only consider, Sir, our own state: our religion is in a book; we have an order of men whose duty it is to teach it; we have one day in the week set apart for it, and this is in general pretty well observed: yet ask the first ten gross men you meet, and hear what they can tell of their religion."

CHAPTER VI.

1776.

Excursion to Bristol.—Rowley's Poems.—Chatterton.—Garrick's "Archer."—Brute Creation.—Chesterfield's "Letters."—"To be, or not to be."—Luxury.—Oglethorpe.—Lord Elibank.—Conversation.—Egotism.—Dr. Oldfield.—Commentators on the Bible.—Lord Thurlow.—Sir John Pringle.—Dinner at Mr. Dilly's.—John Wilkes.—Foote's Mimicry.—Garrick's Wit.—Biography.—Cibber's Plays.—"Difficile est proprie," &c.—City Poets.—"Diabolus Regis."—Lord Bute.—Mrs. Knowles.—Mrs. Rudd.

On Monday, April 29., he and I made an excursion to Bristol, where I was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "Rowley's poetry," as I had seen him enquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "Ossian's poetry." George Catcot, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley as Dr. Hugh Blair was for Ossian (I trust my reverend friend will excuse the comparison), attended us at our inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity, called out, "I 'll make Dr. Johnson a convert." Dr. Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses; while Catcot stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr. Johnson's face, wondering

that he was not yet convinced. We called on Mr. Barret, the surgeon, and saw some of the *originals*, as they were called, which were executed very artificially; but from a careful inspection of them, and a consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, we were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated from internal evidence, by several able critics. (1)

Honest Catcot seemed to pay no attention whatever to any objections, but insisted, as an end of all controversy, that we should go with him to the tower of the church of St. Mary, Redcliff, and *view with our own eyes* the ancient chest in which the manuscripts were found. (2) To this Dr. Johnson good-naturedly agreed; and, though troubled with a shortness of breathing, laboured up a long flight of steps, till we came to the place where the wondrous chest stood. "*There*," said Catcot, with a bouncing confident credulity, "*there* is the very chest itself." After this *ocular demonstration*, there was no more to be said. He brought to my recollection a Scotch Highlander, a man of learning too, and who had seen the world, attesting, and at the same time giving his reasons for, the authenticity of Fingal: "I have heard all that poem when I was young." "Have you, Sir? Pray what have you heard?"

(1) Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Warton, Mr. Malone.

(2) This *naïveté* resembles the style of evidence which Johnson so pleasantly ridicules in the Idler, No. 10. "Jack Sneaker is a hearty adherent to the protestant establishment; he has known those who saw the bed into which the Pretender was conveyed in a warming pan."—C.

"I have heard Ossian, Oscar, and *every one of them.*"

Johnson said of Chatterton, "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things." (1)

We were by no means pleased with our inn at Bristol. "Let us see now," said I, "how we should describe it." Johnson was ready with his raillery "Describe it, Sir? Why, it was so bad, that — Boswell wished to be in Scotland!"

After Dr. Johnson returned to London [May 4th], I was several times with him at his house, where I occasionally slept, in the room that had been assigned for me. I dined with him at Dr. Taylor's, at General Oglethorpe's, and at General Paoli's. To avoid a tedious minuteness, I shall group together what I have preserved of his conversation during this period also, without specifying each scene where it passed, except one, which will be found so remarkable as certainly to deserve a very particular relation. Where the place or the persons do not contribute to the zest of the conversation, it is unnecessary to encumber my page with mentioning them. To know of what vintage our wine is, enables us to judge of its value, and to drink it with more relish: but to have

(1) Of the merit of the poems admitted on both sides of the controversy, he said, "It is a sword that cuts both ways. It is as wonderful that a boy of sixteen years old should have stored his mind with such a strain of ideas and images, as to suppose that such ease of versification and elegance of language were produced by Rowley in the time of Edward the Fourth." — HAWKINS.

the produce of each vine of one vineyard, in the same year, kept separate, would serve no purpose. To know that our wine (to use an advertising phrase) is "of the stock of an ambassador lately deceased," heightens its flavour: but it signifies nothing to know the bin where each bottle was once deposited.

"Garrick," he observed, "does not play the part of Archer in the 'Beaux Stratagem' well. The gentleman should break through the footman, which is not the case as he does it." (1)

"Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this; but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better."

"The little volumes entitled, '*Respublicæ* (2),' which are very well done, were a bookseller's work."

"There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous." This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's "Moral Philosophy." But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of

(1) Garrick, on the other hand, denied that Johnson was capable of distinguishing the *gentleman* from the *footman*. See *antè*, p. 98. — C.

(2) Accounts of the principal States of Europe. — C.

existence upon the terms on which they have it. Madame de Sevigné, who, though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

"That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."

"Though many men are nominally intrusted with the administration of hospitals and other public institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on; owing to confidence in him and indolence in them."

"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son (1), I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman. An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say, 'I'll be genteel.' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in." No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those whose company he happened to be than Johnson, or, however strange

(1) "A pretty book" was made up from these letters by the late Dr. Trusler, entitled "Principles of Politeness. — HALL.

it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements. (1)

Lord Elliot informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner in a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency *in the graces*." Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, Madam (looking towards Johnson), that among *all* your acquaintance, you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce. (2)

(1) I one day commended a young lady for her beauty and pretty behaviour, to whom she thought no objections could have been made. "I saw her (says Dr. Johnson) take a pair of scissors in her left hand; and, although her father is now become a nobleman, and as you say excessively rich, I should, were I a youth of quality ten years hence, hesitate between a girl so neglected and a *negro*."—Piozzi.—"The child who took a pair of scissors in her left hand is now a woman of quality, highly respected, and would *cut* us, I conclude, most deservedly, if more were said on the subject."—Piozzi, *MS.*—I believe that the lady was the eldest daughter of Mr. Lyttelton, afterwards Lord Westcote, married to Sir Richard Hoare. She was born in Jamaica, and thence, perhaps, Johnson's strange allusion to the negro. — C.

(2) Colman, in his "*Random Records*," has given a lively sketch of the appearance and manners of Johnson and Gibbon in society: —

"The learned Gibbon was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say less learned?) Johnson. Their manners and taste, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson, in his rusty brown suit, and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology, and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied, in reference to himself and Gibbon: Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant: the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the

"I read," said he, "Sharpe's Letters on Italy (1) over again, when I was at Bath. There is a great deal of matter in them."

"Mrs. Williams was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides. Little people are apt to be jealous: but they should not be jealous; for they ought to consider, that superior attention will necessarily be paid to superior fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that account may have an equal claim to attention; but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim."

Talking of his notes on Shakspeare, he said, "I despise those who do not see that I am right in the passage, where *as* is repeated, and 'asses of great charge' introduced. That on 'To be, or not to be,' is disputable." (2)

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latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets; Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys: Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending, once or twice in the course of the evening, to talk with me: the great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy; but it was done *more suo*; — still his mannerism prevailed; still he tapped his snuff-box; still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding, as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage." Vol. I. p. 121. — C.

(1) Mr. Samuel Sharpe, a surgeon, who had travelled for his health, and whose representation of Italian manners was supposed to be tinged by the ill humour of a valetudinarian. Baretti took up the defence of his country, and a smart controversy ensued, which made some noise at the time. — C.

(2) It may be observed, that Mr. Malone, in his very valuable edition of Shakspeare, has fully vindicated Dr. Johnson from the idle censures which the first of these notes has given rise to. The interpretation of the other passage, which Dr.

A gentleman, whom I found sitting with him one morning, said, that in his opinion the character of an infidel was more detestable than that of a man notoriously guilty of an atrocious crime. I differed from him, because we are surer of the odiousness of the one, than of the error of the other. JOHNSON. "Sir, I agree with him; for the infidel would be guilty of any crime if he were inclined to it."

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world. One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury. Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of buildings in London. Does it not produce real advantage in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol. It is plain they are in gaol, not for building; for rents are not fallen. A man gives half-a-guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, 'Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal?' Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor, whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor? You are much surer

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Johnson allows to be *disputable*, he has clearly shown to be erroneous. — B.—The first note is on a passage in Hamlet, act v. scene ii. — C.

that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompense of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacock's brains were to be revived, how many carcases would be left to the poor at a cheap rate! and as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol: nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too."

The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made his conversation seem too desultory; Johnson observed, "Oglethorpe, Sir, never *completes* what he has to say."

He on the same account made a similar remark on Patrick Lord Elibank; "Sir, there is nothing *conclusive* in his talk."

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." BOSWELL. "Why then meet at table?" JOHNSON. "Why, to eat and drink together, and to promote kindness; and, Sir this is better done when there is no solid conver ation: for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company, who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this rea-

son Sir Robert Walpole said, he always talked bawdy at his table, because in that all could join.

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman (1) ask Mr. Levet a variety of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by, he broke out, "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both." "A man," said he, "should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb; and, therefore, should avoid having any one topic of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr. Oldfield, (2) who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough. He came into a coffeehouse one day, and told that his grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half an hour. 'Did he indeed speak for half an hour?' (said Belchier, the surgeon) —'Yes.'—'And what did he say of Dr. Oldfield?'—'Nothing.'—'Why then, Sir, he was very ungrateful; for Dr. Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an hour, without saying something of him.'"

"Every man is to take existence on the terms on which it is given to him. To some men it is given on condition of not taking liberties, which other men may take without much harm. One may drink wine, and be nothing the worse for it: on another, wine may have effects so inflammatory as to injure him both in body and mind, and perhaps make him com-

(1) Probably Mr. Boswell himself, who frequently practised this mode of obtaining information. — C.

(2) This, I suppose, was Joshua Oldfield, D.D., the only contemporary of the Duke of Marlborough's, of that name and degree, that I know of. — C.

mit something for which he may deserve to be hanged."

"Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' have not that painted form which is the taste of this age; but it is a book which will always sell, it has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation. I never before read Scotch history with certainty."

I asked him whether he would advise me to read the Bible with a commentary, and what commentaries he would recommend. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, I would have you read the Bible with a commentary; and I would recommend Lowth and Patrick on the Old Testament, and Hammond on the New."

During my stay in London this spring, I solicited his attention to another law case, in which I was engaged. In the course of a contested election for the borough of Dunfermline, which I attended as one of my friend Colonel (afterward Sir Archibald) Campbell's counsel, one of his political agents — who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward — attacked very rudely in the newspapers the Rev. Mr. James Thomson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons. Upon this the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by name from the pulpit with some severity; and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud, "What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of

verity?" (1) I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr. Thomson, in the Court of Session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. The liberty of the pulpit was our great ground of defence; but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The Court of Session, however,—the fifteen judges, who are at the same time the jury,—decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion; and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. Johnson was satisfied that the judgment was wrong, and dictated to me, in confutation of it, the following Argument. [See Appendix, No. II.]

When I read this to Mr. Burke, he was highly pleased, and exclaimed, "Well, he does his work in a workman likemanner." (2)

Mr. Thomson wished to bring the cause by appeal

(1) *A Gallicism*, which has, it appears, with so many others, become vernacular in Scotland. The French call a pulpit the "*chaire de vérité*."—C.

(2) As a proof of Dr. Johnson's extraordinary powers of composition, it appears from the original manuscript of this excellent dissertation, of which he dictated the first eight paragraphs on the 10th of May, and the remainder on the 13th, that there are in the whole only *seven* corrections, or rather variations, and those not considerable. Such were at once the vigorous and accurate emanations of his mind.

before the House of Lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person who lately presided so ably in that most honourable house, and who was then attorney-general. As my readers will no doubt be glad also to read the opinion of this eminent man upon the same subject, I shall here insert it.

CASE.

"There is herewith laid before you, 1. Petition for the Rev. Mr. James Thomson, minister of Dunfermline. 2. Answers thereto. 3. Copy of the judgment of the Court of Session upon both. 4. Notes of the opinions of the judges, being the reasons upon which their decree is grounded.

"These papers you will please to peruse, and give your opinion,

"Whether there is a probability of the above decree of the Court of Session being reversed, if Mr. Thomson should appeal from the same?"

"I don't think the appeal advisable; not only because the value of the judgment is in no degree adequate to the expense; but because there are many chances, that upon the general complexion of the case, the impression will be taken to the disadvantage of the appellant.

"It is impossible to approve the style of that sermon. But the *complaint* was not less ungracious from that man, who had behaved so ill by his original libel, and at the time when he received the reproach he complains of. In the last article all the plaintiffs are equally concerned. It struck me also with some wonder, that the judges should think so much fervour apposite to the occasion of reproving the defendant for a little excess.

"Upon the matter, however, I agree with them in condemning the behaviour of the minister, and in think-

ing it a subject fit for ecclesiastical censure; and even for an action, if any individual could qualify [1] a wrong, and a damage arising from it. But this I doubt. The circumstance of publishing the reproach in a pulpit, though extremely indecent, and culpable in another view, does not constitute a different sort of wrong, or any other rule of law than would have obtained, if the same words had been pronounced elsewhere. I don't know whether there be any difference in the law of Scotland, in the definition of slander, before the commissaries, or the Court of Session. The common law of England does not give way to actions for every reproachful word. An action cannot be brought for general damages upon any words which import less than an offence cognisable by law; consequently no action could have been brought here for the words in question. Both laws admit the truth to be a justification in action *for words*; and the law of England does the same in actions for libels. The judgment, therefore, seems to me to have been wrong, in that the court repelled that defence.

"E. THURLOW."

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more

(1) It is curious to observe that Lord Thurlow has here, perhaps, in compliment to North Britain, made use of a term of the Scotch law, which to an English reader may require explanation. To *qualify* a wrong, is to point out and establish it.

different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematics, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter. (1)

(1) Johnson's dislike of Mr. Wilkes was so great that it extended even to his connections. He happened to dine one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's with a large and distinguished company, amongst which were Mr. Wilkes's brother, Israel, and his lady. In the course of conversation, Mr. Israel Wilkes was about to make some remark, when Johnson suddenly stopped him with, "I hope, Sir, what you are going to say may be better worth hearing than what you have already said." This rudeness shocked and spread a gloom over the whole party, particularly

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson." "What, with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly: "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." "Come," said I, "if you 'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I 'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." (1) I, therefore, while we were sitting

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as Mr. Israel Wilkes was a gentleman of a very amiable character and of refined taste, and, what Dr. Johnson little suspected, a very loyal subject. Johnson afterwards owned to me that he was very sorry that he had "*snubbed* Wilkes, as his wife was present." I replied, that he should be sorry for many reasons. "No," said Johnson, who was very reluctant to apologise for offences of this nature; "no, I only regret it because his wife was by." I believe that he had no kind of motive for this incivility to Mr. I. Wilkes but disgust at his brother's political principles. — MISS REYNOLDS'S *Recoll.*

(1) This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson, when the truth is, it was only *supposed* by me.

quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: "Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—" BOSWELL. "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?" JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care *I* for his *patriotic friends*? Poh!" BOSWELL. "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did

when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion (1), covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, Sir?" said I. "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams." BOSWELL. "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, Sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day, as Mr. Dilly is a very

1) See p. 122. of this volume.

ing you some butter — Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." — "Sir; sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue (1)," but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry-andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him — like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and

(1) "How, when competitors like these contend,
Can *surly virtue* hope to fix a friend." — *London*.

minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" —"Mr. Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller (1), Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater, the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir — It is better here — A little of the brown — Some fat, Sir — A little of the stuffing — Some gravy — Let me have the pleasure of giv-

(1) Of Bath Easton. See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 277. — C.

worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That, all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a postchaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee." JOHNSON. "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot*, but an *American*. He was afterwards

fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible. (1) He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer, but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and, having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.'"

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew

(1) Foote told me that Johnson said of him, "For loud, obstreperous, broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal."

that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having made enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player; if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow, I wanted to write the 'Life of Dryden (1),' and, in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney (2), and old

(1) This was probably for "Cibber's Lives," as well as the "Life of Shakspeare," mentioned *antè*, p. 149. n. — C.

(2) Owen M'Swinney, who died in 1754, and bequeathed his fortune to Mrs. Woffington, the actress. He had been a manager

Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his 'Apology' to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:

> 'Each might his several province well command,
> Would all but stoop to what they understand.'"

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps*; he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then showed me an ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. (1) I told him that when the

of Drury Lane theatre, and afterwards of the Queen's theatre in the Haymarket. He was also a dramatic writer, having produced a comedy entitled "The Quacks, or Love's the Physician," 1705, and two operas. — M.

(1) See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 176.

ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries." "When I was at Inverary," said he, "on a visit to my old friend Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, 'It is, then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me; for if I had displeased the duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

'Off with his head! so much for *Aylesbury*.'

I was then member for Aylesbury."

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's "Art of Poetry," *Difficile est propriè communia dicere.* Mr. Wilkes, according to my note, gave the interpretation thus: "It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things; as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers." But, upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say, that "the word *communia*, being a Roman law term, signifies

here things *communis juris*, that is to say, what have never yet been treated by any body; and this appears clearly from what followed, —

'———— Tuque
Rectiùs Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

You will easier make a tragedy out of the Iliad than on any subject not handled before." (1) JOHNSON. "He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done."

WILKES. "We have no city-poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. (2) There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits." JOHNSON. "I suppose, Sir, Settle did as well for aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?"

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON.

(1) [For Mr. Boswell's strictures on Wilkes's interpretation of Horace's "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*," see *Appendix*, No. III.]

(2) [Settle, for his factious audacity, was made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's-day. Of these bards he was the last. He died, in 1723, a pensioner in the Charterhouse. — JOHNSON, *Life of Dryden*.]

"Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON "Why, yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgment of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgment is obtained, can take place only if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*. WILKES. "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON (to Mr. Wilkes). "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell, and showed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility; for you know

he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES. "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people, like you and me." JOHNSON (smiling). "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the attorney-general, *Diabolus regis*; adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good-humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. (1) Amidst some patriotic groans, somebody (I think the alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it." (2)

(1) It is to this gentleman that allusion is supposed to be made in the following anecdote:—"Some one mentioned a gentleman of that party for having behaved oddly on an occasion where faction was not concerned: 'Is he not a citizen of London, a native of North America, and a Whig?' said Johnson. 'Let him be absurd, I beg of you: when a monkey is too like a man, it shocks one.'"—PIOZZI, p. 64.—C.

(2) It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed.

WILKES. "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate 'MORTIMER' to him."

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to show a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards in a conversation with me waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson showed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which, in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who, though widely different, had so many things in common — classical learning, modern literature, wit and humour, and ready repartee — that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negociation*; and pleasantly said, "that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed. (1)

(1) The following is Dr. Johnson's own good-humoured

I talked a good deal to him of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination.(1) To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her, he said on a former occasion, "Nay, Madam, Boswell is in the right; I should have visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting every thing into the newspapers." This evening he exclaimed, "I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs. Rudd."

I mentioned a scheme which I had of making a tour to the Isle of Man, and giving a full account of it; and that Mr. Burke had playfully suggested as a motto,

"The proper study of mankind is MAN."

JOHNSON. "Sir, you will get more by the book than the jaunt will cost you; so you will have your diversion for nothing, and add to your reputation."(2)

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account to Mrs. Thrale of this meeting:—"For my part I begin to settle, and keep company with *grave aldermen.* I dined yesterday in the Poultry with Mr. Alderman Wilkes, and Mr. Alderman Lee, and Councillor Lee, his brother. There sat you the while thinking, 'What is Johnson doing?' What should he be doing? He is breaking jokes with Jack Wilkes upon the Scotch. Such, Madam, are the vicissitudes of things! And there was Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker, that works the sutile pictures, who is a great admirer of your conversation."—C.

(1) See *antè*, p. 60. Her power of fascination was celebrated, because it was the fashion to suppose that she had fascinated her lover to the gallows.—C.

(2) "May 14. 1776. Boswell goes away on Thursday very well satisfied with his journey. Some great men have promised to obtain him a place; and then a fig for his father and his new wife."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 324.—This place he never obtained, and the critical reader will observe several passages in this work, the tone of which may be attributed to his disappointment in this point.—See *antè*, p. 56. Lord Auchinleck had lately married

On the evening of the next day, I took leave of him, being to set out for Scotland. I thanked him, with great warmth, for all his kindness. "Sir," said he, "you are very welcome. Nobody repays it with more." (1)

Elizabeth Boswell, sister of Claude Irvine Boswell, afterwards a Lord of Session, by the title of Lord Balmuto. She was the cousin germain [illegible] her husband. Of this marriage there was no issue. — C.

(1) "May 18. 1776. Boswell went away on Thursday night with no great inclination to travel northward: but who can contend with destiny? He says he has a very pleasant journey. He carries with him two or three good resolutions; [illegible] hope they will not mould on the road." — *Letters*, v [illegible] p. 320. — C.

CHAPTER VII.

1776—1777.

Sir Joshua Reynold's Dinners.—Goldsmith's Epitaph.—The Round Robin.—Employment of Time.—Blair's Sermons.—Easter Day.—Prayer.—Sir Alexander Dick.—Shaw's Erse Grammar.—Johnson engages to write "The Lives of the English Poets."—Edward Dilly.—Correspondence.—Charles O'Connor.—Dr. Zachary Pearce's Posthumous Works.—Prologue to Hugh Kelly's "Word to the Wise."

How very false is the notion that has gone round the world of the rough, and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man! That he had occasional sallies of heat of temper, and that he was sometimes, perhaps, too "easily provoked" by absurdity and folly, and sometimes too desirous of triumph in colloquial contest, must be allowed. The quickness both of his perception and sensibility disposed him to sudden explosions of satire; to which his extraordinary readiness of wit was a strong and almost irresistible incitement. To adopt one of the finest images in Mr. Home's "Douglas,"

——"On each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash!"——

I admit that the beadle within him was often so eager

to apply the laws, that the judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation.

That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted; but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand to knock down every one who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word; so much so, that many gentlemen who were long acquainted with him never received, or even heard a strong expression from him.

LETTER 248. TO MRS. THRALE.

"May 22. 1776.

"On Friday and Saturday I dined with Dr. Taylor, who is in discontent, but resolved not to stay much longer to hear the opinions of lawyers, who are all against him. On Sunday I dined at Sir Joshua's house on the hill [Richmond], with the Bishop of St. Asaph [Shipley]: the dinner was good, and the bishop is knowing and conversible." (1)

(1) This praise of Sir Joshua's dinner was not a matter of course; for his table, though very agreeable, was not what is usually called a *good* one, as appears from the following description given of it by Mr. Courtenay (a frequent and favourite guest) to Sir James Mackintosh: —

"There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good humour; a coarse inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement. A table, prepared for seven or eight, was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives, forks, plates, and glasses succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied with them before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time, and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua could never be persuaded to replace

LETTER 249. TO HENRY THRALE, ESQ.

"June 3. 1776.

"My *Mistress* writes as if she was afraid that I should make too much haste to see her. Pray tell her that there is no danger. The lameness of which I made mention in one of my notes has improved into a very serious and troublesome fit of the gout. I creep about and hang by both hands. I enjoy all the dignity of lameness. I receive ladies and dismiss them sitting. 'Painful pre-eminence!'"

The following letters concerning an Epitaph which he wrote for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, in Westminster Abbey, afford at once a proof of his unaffected modesty, his carelessness as to his own writings, and of the great respect which he entertained for the taste and judgment of the excellent and eminent person to whom the first and last are addressed: —

LETTER 250. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"May 16. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been kept away from you, I know not well how, and of these vexatious hindrances

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them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial, animated bustle among his guests, our host sat perfectly composed; always attentive to what was said, never minding what was eat or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians, composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord. At five o'clock precisely dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour perhaps for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by this invidious distinction. His friends and intimate acquaintance will ever love his memory, and will long regret those social hours, and the cheerfulness of that irregular, convivial table, which no one has attempted to revive or imitate, or was indeed qualified to supply." — C.

I know not when there will be an end. I therefore send you the poor dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself; and if you then think it right, show it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected. If you think any thing much amiss, keep it to yourself till we come together. I have sent two copies, but prefer the card. The dates must be settled by Dr. Percy. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 251. FROM MISS REYNOLDS.

"Richmond Hill, June 21. 1776.

"SIR,—You saw by my last letter that I knew nothing of your illness, and it was unkind of you not to tell me what had been the matter with you; and you should have let me know how Mrs. Thrale and all the family were; but that would have been a sad transgression of the rule you have certainly prescribed to yourself of writing to some sort of people just such a number of lines. Be so good as to favour me with Dr. Goldsmith's Epitaph; and if you have no objection, I should be very glad to send it to Dr. Beattie. I am writing now to Mrs. Beattie, and can scarce hope she will ever excuse my shameful neglect of writing to her, but by sending her something curious for Dr. Beattie.

"I don't know whether my brother ever mentioned to you what Dr. Beattie said in a letter he received from him the beginning of last month. As I have his letter here, I will transcribe it. 'In my third Essay, which treats of the advantages of classical learning, I have said something of Dr. Johnson, which I hope will please him; I ought not to call it a compliment, for it expresses nothing but the real sentiments of my heart. I can never forget the many and great obligations I am under to his genius and to his virtue, and I wish for an opportunity of testifying my gratitude to the world.'

"My brother says he has lost Dr. Goldsmith's Epi-

taph, otherwise I would not trouble you for it. Indeed I should or I ought have asked if you had any objection to my sending it, before I did send it.—I am, my good Sir, &c. "FRANCES REYNOLDS."

LETTER 252. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"June 21. 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM,—You are as naughty as you can be. I am willing enough to write to you when I have any thing to say. As for my disorder, as Sir Joshua saw me, I fancied he would tell you, and that I needed not tell you myself. Of Dr. Goldsmith's Epitaph, I sent Sir Joshua two copies, and had none myself, If he has lost it, he has not done well. But I suppose I can recollect it, and will send it to you.—I am, Madam, &c. SAM. JOHNSON.

"P.S.—All the Thrales are well, and Mrs. Thrale has a great regard for Miss Reynolds."

LETTER 253. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"June 22. 1776.

"SIR,—Miss Reynolds has a mind to send the Epitaph to Dr. Beattie; I am very willing, but having no copy, cannot immediately recollect it. She tells me you have lost it. Try to recollect, and put down as much as you retain; you perhaps may have kept what I have dropped. The lines for which I am at a loss are something of *rerum civilium sive naturalium*. (1) It was a sorry trick to lose it; help me if you can.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON.

"The gout grows better, but slowly."

(1) These words must have been in the other copy. They are not in that which was preferred.—C.

It was, I think, after I had left London in this year, that this Epitaph gave occasion to a remonstrance to the *Monarch of Literature*, for an account of which I am indebted to Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

That my readers may have the subject more fully and clearly before them, I shall insert the Epitaph:

"OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator:
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI. (1);
Eblanæ literis institutus;
Obiit Londini,
April. IV. MDCCLXXIV."

Sir William Forbes writes to me thus: "I enclose the *Round Robin*. This *jeu d'esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr. Goldsmith. The Epitaph written for him by Dr. Johnson became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were sug-

(1) This was a mistake, which was not discovered till after Goldsmith's monument was put up in Westminster Abbey. He was born Nov. 29. 1728; and therefore, when he died, he was in his forty-sixth year. — M.

gested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's consideration. But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe (1), drew up an address to Dr. Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing, to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with much good humour (2), and

(1) This prelate, who was afterwards translated to the see of Limerick, died at Wimbledon, in Surrey, June 7. 1806, in his eightieth year. The original *Round Robin* remained in his possession; the paper which Sir William Forbes transmitted to Mr. Boswell being only a copy. — MALONE. The engraving published by Mr. Boswell was not an exact *fac simile* of the *whole* of this curious paper (which is of the size called *foolscap*, and too large to be folded into an ordinary volume), but of the *signatures* only; and, in later editions, even these have, by successive copying, lost some of their original accuracy. By the favour of the Earl of Balcarras (to whom the paper has descended from his aunt, Lady Anne, the widow of the son of Bishop Barnard) I have been enabled to present the reader with a fresh and more accurate fac simile of the signatures. — C.

(2) He, however, upon seeing Dr. Warton's name to the suggestion, that the epitaph should be in English, observed to Sir Joshua, "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." He said too, "I should have thought Mund Burke would have had more sense." Mr. Langton, who

desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen, that he would alter the Epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it, but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey, with an English inscription.* (1)

"I consider this *Round Robin* as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr. Johnson's character."

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was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin.* The epitaph is engraved upon Dr. Goldsmith's monument without any alteration. At another time, when somebody endeavoured to argue in favour of its being in English, Johnson said, "The language of the country of which a learned man was a native is not the language fit for his epitaph, which should be in ancient and permanent language. Consider, Sir, how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph upon Erasmus *in Dutch!*" * For my own part, I think it would be best to have epitaphs written both in a learned language and in the language of the country; so that they might have the advantage of being more universally understood, and at the same time be secured of classical stability. I cannot, however, but be of opinion, that it is not sufficiently discriminative. Applying to Goldsmith equally the epithets of "*Poetæ, Historici, Physici,*" is surely not right; for as to his claim to the last of those epithets, I have heard Johnson himself say, "Goldsmith, Sir, will give us a very fine book upon the subject; but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history." His book is, indeed, an excellent performance, though in some instances he appears to have trusted too much to Buffon, who, with all his theoretical ingenuity and extraordinary eloquence, I suspect had little actual information in the science on which he wrote so admirably. For instance, he tells us that the *cow* sheds her horns every two years; a most palpable error, which Goldsmith has faithfully transferred into his book. It is wonderful that Buffon, who lived so much in the country, at his noble seat, should have fallen into such a blunder. I suppose he has confounded the *cow* with the *deer.*

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 164., on the subject of English inscriptions to English writers. — C.

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* Not a case in point. Erasmus had not written in Dutch. — C.

My readers are presented with a faithful transcript of a paper, which I doubt not of their being desirous to see.

[× E. Gibbon. × Jos. Warton. × Edm. Burke. ×

Thos. Franklin. (2) × Ant. Chamier. (3) × Geo. Colman.

"We the Circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended epitaph for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith; which, considered abstractedly, appears to be, for elegant composition, and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author; are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is, perhaps, not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We, therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would, at least, take the trouble of revising it; and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper on a further perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the epitaph in English, rather than in Latin; as we think the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament, which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself."

× W. Forbes. × J. Reynolds. × William Vachell. (4) ×]

T. Barnard. × R. B. Sheridan. × P. Metcalfe. (1)

(1) See *post*, sub 3d Oct. 1782. — C.

(2) There would be no doubt that this was Thomas Franklin, D.D. the translator of Sophocles and Lucian, but that the Biog. Dict., and indeed the Doctor's own title-pages, spell his name *Francklin*. He died in 1784. — C.

(3) Anthony Chamier, Esq. M.P. for Tamworth, and Under-Secretary of State from 1775 till his death, 12th Oct. 1780. — C.

(4) This gentleman was a friend of Sir Joshua's, and attended his funeral. — C.

Sir William Forbes's observation is very just. The anecdote now related proves, in the strongest manner, the reverence and awe with which Johnson was regarded, by some of the most eminent men of his time, in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him; while it also confirms what I have again and again inculcated, that he was by no means of that ferocious and irascible character which has been ignorantly imagined. (1)

This hasty composition is also to be remarked as one of the thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr. Burke; who, while he is equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least; can, with equal facility, embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation. (2)

LETTER 254. TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"May 16. 1776.

"MADAM, — You must not think me uncivil in omitting to answer the letter with which you favoured me some time ago. I imagined it to have been written without Mr. Boswell's knowledge, and therefore supposed the answer to require, what I could not find, a private conveyance.

"The difference with Lord Auchinleck is now over; and since young Alexander has appeared, I hope no more difficulties will arise among you; for I sincerely wish you all happy. Do not teach the young ones to

(1) Most readers would draw a directly contrary conclusion. — C.

(2) Besides this Latin epitaph, Johnson honoured the memory of his friend Goldsmith with a short one in Greek. — See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 189.

dislike me, as you dislike me yourself; but let me at least have Veronica's kindness, because she is my acquaintance.

"You will now have Mr. Boswell home; it is well that you have him; he has led a wild life. I have taken him to Lichfield, and he has followed Mr. Thrale to Bath. Pray take care of him, and tame him. The only thing in which I have the honour to agree with you is, in loving him: and while we are so much of a mind in a matter of so much importance, our other quarrels will, I hope, produce no great bitterness. I am, Madam, &c. "SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 255. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, June 25. 1776.

"You have formerly complained that my letters were too long. There is no danger of that complaint being made at present; for I find it difficult for me to write to you at all." [Here an account of having been afflicted with a return of melancholy or bad spirits.] "The boxes of books (1) which you sent to me are arrived; but I have not yet examined the contents. I send you Mr. Maclaurin's paper for the negro who claims his freedom in the Court of Session."

LETTER 256. TO MR. BOSWELL.

July 2. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — These black fits of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. When did I complain that your letters were too long? (2) Your last letter, after a very long delay,

(1) Upon a settlement of our account of expenses on a tour to the Hebrides, there was a balance due to me, which Dr. Johnson chose to discharge by sending books.

(1) Baretti told me that Johnson complained of my writing

brought very bad news." [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and — what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself — a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction.] "Read Cheyne's 'English Malady;' but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness.

"To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill. I do not now say any more, than that I am, with great kindness and sincerity, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"It was last year determined by Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench, that a negro cannot be taken out of the kingdom without his own consent."

LETTER 257. TO MR. BOSWELL.

"July 16, 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I make haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached.

"Now, my dear Bozzy, let us have done with quarrels and with censure. Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many

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very long letters to him when I was upon the continent: which was most certainly true; but it seems my friend did not remember it.

books among them which you never need read through, but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult. Of these books, of which the use is only occasional, it is often sufficient to know the contents, that, when any question arises, you may know where to look for information.

"Since I wrote, I have looked over Mr. Maclaurin's plea, and think it excellent. How is the suit carried on? If by subscription, I commission you to contribute, in my name, what is proper. Let nothing be wanting in such a case. Dr. Drummond (1), I see, is superseded. His father would have grieved; but he lived to obtain the pleasure of his son's election, and died before that pleasure was abated.

"Langton's lady has brought him a girl, and both are well: I dined with him the other day.

"It vexes me to tell you, that on the evening of the 29th of May I was seized by the gout, and am not quite well. The pain has not been violent, but the weakness and tenderness were very troublesome; and what is said to be very uncommon, it has not alleviated my other disorders. Make use of youth and health while you have them. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am, my dear Sir, your most affectionate

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 258. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 18. 1776.

"MY DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 2d of this month was rather a harsh medicine; but I was de-

(1) The son of Johnson's old friend, Mr. William Drummond. (See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 10., and Vol. V. p. 135.) He was a young man of such distinguished merit, that he was nominated to one of the medical professorships in the college of Edinburgh, without solicitation, while he was at Naples. Having other views, he did not accept of the honour, and soon afterwards died.

lighted with that spontaneous tenderness, which, a few days afterwards, sent forth such balsam as your next brought me. I found myself for some time so ill that all I could do was to preserve a decent appearance, while all within was weakness and distress. Like a reduced garrison that has some spirit left, I hung out flags, and planted all the force I could muster upon the walls. I am now much better, and I sincerely thank you for your kind attention and friendly counsel.

"Count Manucci (¹) came here last week from travelling in Ireland. I have shown him what civilities I could on his account, on yours, and on that of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. He has had a fall from his horse, and been much hurt. I regret this unlucky accident, for he seems to be a very amiable man."

As the evidence of what I have mentioned at the beginning of this year, I select from his private register the following passage: —

"July 25. 1776. — O God, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired should be sought by labour, and who, by thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect, look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O Lord, to design only what is lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Pr. and Med. p. 151.)

It appears from a note subjoined, that this was composed when he "purposed to apply vigorously

(¹) A Florentine nobleman, mentioned by Johnson in his "Notes of his Tour in France." I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him in London, in the spring of this year.

to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues."

Such a purpose, so expressed, at the age of sixty-seven, is admirable and encouraging; and it must impress all the thinking part of my readers with a consolatory confidence in habitual devotion, when they see a man of such enlarged intellectual powers as Johnson, thus, in the genuine earnestness of secrecy, imploring the aid of that Supreme Being, "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

LETTER 259. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"Aug. 3. 1776.

"SIR, — A young man, whose name is Paterson, offers himself this evening to the Academy. He is the son of a man (1) for whom I have long had a kindness, and is now abroad in distress. I shall be glad that you will be pleased to show him any little countenance, or pay him any small distinction. How much it is in your power to favour or to forward a young man I do not know; nor do I know how much this candidate deserves favour by his personal merit, or what hopes his proficiency may now give of future eminence. I recommend him as the son of my friend. Your character and station enable you to give a young man great encouragement by very easy means. You have heard of a man who asked no other favour of Sir Robert Walpole, than that he would bow to him at his levee. — I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Samuel Paterson, formerly a bookseller, latterly an auctioneer, and well known for his skill in forming catalogues of books. He died in London, Oct. 22. 1802. — [See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 209.]

LETTER 260. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Aug. 30. 1776.

(After giving him an account of my having examined the chests of books which he had sent to me, and which contained what may be truly called a numerous and miscellaneous *stall library*, thrown together at random:—) "Lord Hailes was against the decree in the case of my client, the minister; not that he justified the minister, but because the parishioner both provoked and retorted. I sent his lordship your able argument upon the case for his perusal. His observation upon it in a letter to me was, 'Dr. Johnson's *Suasorium* is pleasantly (1) and artfully composed. I suspect, however, that he has not convinced himself; for I believe that he is better read in ecclesiastical history, than to imagine that a bishop or a presbyter has a right to begin censure or discipline *è cathedrâ*.' (2)

"For the honour of Count Ma[illegible]ci, as well as to observe that exactness of truth which you have taught me, I must correct what I said in a former letter. He did not fall from his horse, which might have been an imputation on his skill as an officer of cavalry; his horse fell with him.

"I have, since I saw you, read every word of 'Granger's Biographical History.' It has entertained me exceedingly, and I do not think him the *Whig* that you supposed. Horace Walpole's being his patron is,

(1) Why his Lordship uses the epithet *pleasantly*, when speaking of a grave piece of reasoning, I cannot conceive. But different men have different notions of pleasantry. I happened to sit by a gentleman one evening at the Opera-house in London, who, at the moment when *Medea* appeared to be in great agony at the thought of killing her children, turned to me with a smile, and said "*funny* enough."

(2) Dr. Johnson afterwards told me, that he was of opinion that a clergyman had this right.

indeed, no good sign of his political principles. But he denied to Lord Mountstuart that he was a Whig, and said he had been accused by both parties of partiality. It seems he was like Pope, —

'While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.'

I wish you would look more into his book; and as Lord Mountstuart wishes much to find a proper person to continue the work upon Granger's plan, and has desired I would mention it to you, if such a man occurs, please to let me know. His lordship will give him generous encouragement." (1)

LETTER 261. TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

Brighthelmstone, Oct. 21. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — Having spent about six weeks at this place, we have at length resolved on returning. I expect to see you all in Fleet Street on the 30th of this month.

I did not go into the sea till last Friday (2); but think to go most of this week, though I know not that it does me any good. My nights are very restless and tiresome, but I am otherwise well. I have written word of my coming to Mrs. Williams.

Remember me kindly to Francis and Betsey. (3) — I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON." (4)

(1) Lord Mountstuart, afterwards first Marquis of Bute, had also patronised, in a similar manner, Sir John Hill's immense "Vegetable System" (twenty-six vols. folio!); but Sir John's widow published, in 1788, "An Address to the Public," in which she alleged that Lord Bute had acted very penuriously in that matter. — C.

(2) Johnson was a good swimmer. "One of the bathing-men at Brighton seeing him swim, said, 'Why, Sir, you must have been a stout-hearted gentleman forty years ago.'" — Piozzi. — C.

(3) His female servant. — M.

(4) For this and Dr. Johnson's other letters to Mr. Levet, I

I again wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 21st of October, informing him, that my father had, in the most liberal manner, paid a large debt for me, and that I had now the happiness of being upon very good terms with him; to which he returned the following answer: —

LETTER 262. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Bolt Court, Nov. 16. 1776.

"DEAR SIR, — I had great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is but short: no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously momentous. Let us not throw away any of our days upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry; and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence! Do you ever hear from Mr. Langton? I visit him sometimes, but he does not talk. I do not like his scheme of life; but as I am not permitted to understand it, I cannot set any thing right that is wrong. His children are sweet babies.

"I hope my irreconcileable enemy, Mrs. Boswell, is well. Desire her not to transmit her malevolence to the young people. Let me have Alexander, and Veronica, and Euphemia, for my friends.

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am indebted to my old acquaintance Mr. Nathaniel Thomas, whose worth and ingenuity have been long known to a respectable though not a wide circle, and whose collection of medals would do credit to persons of greater opulence. — B. — Mr. Thomas was many years editor of the "St. James's Chronicle." He died March 1. 1795. — M.

"Mrs. Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your wellwishers, is in a feeble and languishing state, with little hopes of growing better. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but is little benefited; and Dr. Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. Death is, however, at a distance: and what more than that can we say of ourselves? I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay. Mr. Levet is sound, wind and limb.

"I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmstone. The place was very dull; and I was not well: the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversification. Every year, however, we cannot wander, and must therefore endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his 'Treatise of Œconomy,' that if every thing be kept in a certain place, when any thing is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will show what is wanting; so if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

"I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suffered much for want of it; and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me. I am, my dearest Boswell, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 16th of November, I informed him that Mr. Strahan had sent me *twelve* copies of the "Journey to the Western Islands," handsomely bound, instead of the *twenty* copies which were stipulated, but which, I supposed, were to be only in sheets; requested to know how they should be

distributed; and mentioned that I had another son born to me, who was named David, and was a sickly infant.

LETTER 263. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 21. 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been for some time ill of a cold, which, perhaps, I made an excuse to myself for not writing, when in reality I know not what to say.

"The books you must at last distribute as you think best, in my name, or your own, as you are inclined, or as you judge most proper. Every body cannot be obliged; but I wish that nobody may be offended. Do the best you can.

"I congratulate you on the increase of your family, and hope that little David is by this time well, and his mamma perfectly recovered. I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father. Cultivate his paternal tenderness as much as you can. To live at variance at all is uncomfortable; and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable. Besides that, in the whole dispute you have the wrong side; at least you gave the first provocations, and some of them very offensive. Let it now be all over. As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shown you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence; this will secure your father. When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace, they will not willingly lose it. If Mrs. Boswell would be but friends with me, we might now shut the temple of Janus.

"What came of Dr. Memis's cause? Is the question about the negro determined? Has Sir Allan any reasonable hopes? What is become of poor Macquarry? Let me know the event of all these litigations. I wish particularly well to the negro and Sir Allan.

"Mrs. Williams has been much out of order; and though she is something better, is likely, in her physician's opinion, to endure her malady for life, though she may, perhaps, die of some other. Mrs. Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy. if it were very reasonable to wish much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

"Baretti went away from Thrale's in some whimsical fit of disgust, or ill-nature, without taking any leave. It is well if he finds in any other place as good an habitation, and as many conveniences. He has got five and twenty guineas by translating Sir Joshua's Discourses into Italian, and Mr. Thrale gave him an hundred in the spring; so that he is yet in no difficulties.

"Colman has bought Foote's patent, and is to allow Foote for life sixteen hundred pounds a year, as Reynolds told me, and to allow him to play so often on such terms that he may gain four hundred pounds more. What Colman can get by this bargain (1), but trouble and hazard, I do not see. I am, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The Reverend Dr. Hugh Blair, who had long been admired as a preacher at Edinburgh, thought now of diffusing his excellent sermons more extensively, and increasing his reputation, by publishing a collection of them. He transmitted the manuscript to Mr. Strahan, the printer, who, after keeping it for some time, wrote a letter to him, discouraging the public-

(1) It turned out, however, a very fortunate bargain; for Foote, though not then fifty-six, died at an inn in Dover, in less than a year, October 21, 1777. — M.

ation. Such, at first, was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr. Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr. Johnson for his opinion; and after his unfavourable letter to Dr. Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson, on Christmas-eve, a note in which was the following paragraph: —

"I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation: to say it is good, is to say too little."

I believe Mr. Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr. Johnson concerning them; and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr. Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase the volume, for which he and Mr. Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the public so high, that, to their honour be it recorded, the proprietors made Dr. Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards of another, of fifty pounds, thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price; and, when he prepared another volume, they gave him at once three hundred pounds, being in all five hundred pounds, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness; and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than six hundred pounds. (1)

(1) A fourth volume was purchased on the same liberal terms, and a fifth was published after his death, in 1801, with "A short Account of his Life, by the Rev. Dr. Finlayson." A larger life appeared in 1807, by Dr. Hill. — CHALMERS.

LETTER 264. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Wednesday, January 15. 1 in the morning, 1777.

"*Omnium rerum vicissitudo!* The night after last Thursday was so bad that I took ipecacuanha the next day. The next night was no better. On Saturday I dined with Sir Joshua. The night was such as I was forced to rise and pass some hours in a chair, with great labour of respiration. I found it now time to do something, and went to Dr. Lawrence, and told him I would do what he should order, without reading the prescription. He sent for a chirurgeon, and took about twelve ounces of blood, and in the afternoon I got sleep in a chair.

"At night, when I came to lie down, after trial of an hour or two, I found sleep impracticable, and therefore did what the doctor permitted in a case of distress; I rose, and opening the orifice, let out about ten ounces more. Frank and I were but awkward; but, with Mr. Levet's help, we stopped the stream, and I lay down again, though to little purpose; the difficulty of breathing allowed no rest. I slept again in the daytime, in an erect posture. The doctor has ordered me a second bleeding, which I hope will set my breath at liberty. Last night I could lie but a little at a time.

"Yet I do not make it a matter of much form. I was to-day at Mrs. Gardiner's. When I have bled to-morrow, I will not give up Langton nor Paradise. But I beg that you will fetch me away on Friday. I do not know but clearer air may do me good; but whether the air be clear or dark, let me come to you.(1) I am, &c.

"'To sleep, or not to sleep——'"

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(1) This letter affords a strong proof of Johnson's anxiety for society, and the effort he would make, even over disease, to enjoy it.—C.

In 1777, it appears from his "Prayers and Meditations," that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom, which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph, which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted: —

"When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies." (P. 155.)

But we find his devotions in this year eminently fervent; and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure, and gladness.

On Easter-day we find the following emphatic prayer: —

"Almighty and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve thee with pure affection and a

cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me! Years and infirmities oppress me; terror and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge! In all dangers protect me; in all perplexities relieve and free me; and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, as that, when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen." (P. 158.)

While he was at church, the agreeable impressions upon his mind are thus commemorated: —

"On Easter-day I was at church early, and there prayed over my prayer, and commended Tetty and my other friends. I was for some time much distressed, but at last obtained, I hope, from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased, and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer-Book, —

> "Vita ordinanda.
> Biblia legenda.
> Theologiæ opera danda.
> Serviendum et lætandum."

"I then went to the altar, having, I believe, again read my prayer. I then went to the table and communicated, praying for some time afterwards, but the particular matter of my prayer I do not remember.

"I dined, by an appointment, with Mrs. Gardiner, and passed the afternoon with such calm gladness of mind, as it is very long since I felt before. I came home, and began to read the Bible. I passed the night in such sweet uninterrupted sleep as I have not known since I slept at Fort Augustus.

"On Monday I dined with Sheward, on Tuesday with Paradise. The mornings have been devoured by

company, and one intrusion has, through the whole week, succeeded to another.

"At the beginning of the year I proposed to myself a scheme of life, and a plan of study; but neither life has been rectified, nor study followed. Days and months pass in a dream; and I am afraid that my memory grows less tenacious, and my observation less attentive. If I am decaying, it is time to make haste. My nights are restless and tedious, and my days drowsy. The flatulence which torments me has sometimes so obstructed my breath, that the act of respiration became not only voluntary, but laborious in a decumbent posture. By copious bleeding I was relieved, but not cured.

"I have this year omitted church on most Sundays, intending to supply the deficience in the week. So that I owe twelve attendances on worship. I will make no more such superstitious stipulations, which entangle the mind with unbidden obligations." (P. 156—159.)

Mr. Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr. Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr. Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentic particulars of the life of her celebrated relation. Concerning her is the following letter: —

LETTER 265. TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

"Feb. 25. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — You will be glad to hear that from Mrs. Goldsmith, whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of gratitude to us all, with promise to make the enquiries which we recommended to her. I would have had the honour of conveying this intelligence to Miss Caulfield, but that her letter is not at hand, and I know not the direction. You will tell the good news. — I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 266. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb 14. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR, — My state of epistolary accounts with you at present is extraordinary. The balance, as to number, is on your side. I am indebted to you for two letters: one dated the 16th of November, upon which very day I wrote to you, so that our letters were exactly exchanged, and one dated the 21st of December last.

"My heart was warmed with gratitude by the truly kind contents of both of them, and it is amazing and vexing that I have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to you. But delay is inherent in me, by nature or by bad habit. I waited till I should have an opportunity of paying you my compliments on a new year. I have procrastinated till the year is no longer new.

"Dr. Memis's cause was determined against him, with 40*l.* costs. The lord president, and two other of the judges, dissented from the majority upon this ground: that although there may have been no intention to injure him by calling him *doctor of medicine* instead of *physician*; yet, as he remonstrated against the designation before the charter was printed off, and represented that it was disagreeable, and even hurtful to him, it was ill-natured to refuse to alter it, and let him have the designation to which he was certainly entitled. My opinion is, that our court has judged wrong. The defendants were *in malâ fide*, to persist in naming him in a way that he disliked. You remember poor Goldsmith, when he grew important, and wished to appear *Doctor Major* (1), could not bear your calling him *Goldy*. Would it not have been wrong to have named him so in your 'Preface to Shakspeare,' or in any serious permanent writing of any sort? The difficulty is, whether

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 98. — C.

an action should be allowed on such petty wrongs. *De minimis non curat lex.*

"The negro cause is not yet decided. A memorial is preparing on the side of slavery. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed. Maclaurin is made happy by your approbation of his memorial for the black. Macquarry was here in the winter, and we passed an evening together. The sale of his estate cannot be prevented.

"Sir Allan Maclean's suit against the Duke of Argyle, for recovering the ancient inheritance of his family, is now fairly before all our judges. I spoke for him yesterday, and Maclaurin to-day; Crosbie spoke to-day against him. Three more counsel are to be heard, and next week the cause will be determined. I send you the informations, or cases, on each side, which I hope you will read. You said to me, when we were under Sir Allan's hospitable roof, 'I will help you with my pen.' You said it with a generous glow; and though his Grace of Argyle did afterwards mount you upon an excellent horse, upon which 'you looked like a bishop,' you must not swerve from your purpose at Inchkenneth. I wish you may understand the points at issue, amidst our Scotch law principles and phrases." [Here followed a full state of the case, in which I endeavoured to make it as clear as I could to an Englishman who had no knowledge of the formularies and technical language of the law of Scotland.]

"I shall inform you how the cause is decided here. But as it may be brought under the review of our judges, and is certainly to be carried by appeal to the House of Lords, the assistance of such a mind as yours will be of consequence. Your paper on *Vicious Intromission* is a noble proof of what you can do even in Scoth law.

"I have not yet distributed all your books. Lord Hailes and Lord Monboddo have each received one

and return you thanks. Monboddo dined with me lately, and, having drunk tea, we were a good while by ourselves; and as I knew that he had read the 'Journey' superficially, as he did not talk of it as I wished, I brought it to him, and read aloud several passages; and then he talked so, that I told him he was to have a copy *from the author*. He begged *that* might be marked on it. I ever am, my dear Sir, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 267. FROM SIR ALEXANDER DICK.

"Prestonfield, Feb. 17. 1777.

"SIR, — I had yesterday the honour of receiving your book of your 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland,' which you were so good as to send me, by the hands of our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell, of Auchinleck; for which I return you my most hearty thanks; and, after carefully reading it over again, shall deposit it in my little collection of choice books, next our worthy friend's 'Journey to Corsica.' As there are many things to admire in both performances, I have often wished that no travels or journey should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity, and capacity to judge well and describe faithfully, and in good language, the situation, condition, and manners of the countries passed through. Indeed, our country of Scotland, in spite of the union of the crowns, is still in most places so devoid of clothing or cover from hedges and plantations, that it was well you gave your readers a sound *monitoire* with respect to that circumstance. The truths you have told, and the purity of the language in which they are expressed, as your 'Journey' is universally read, may, and already appear to have, a very good effect. For a man of my acquaintance, who has the largest nursery for trees and hedges in this country, tells me, that of late the demand upon him for

these articles is doubled, and sometimes tripled. I have, therefore, listed Dr. Samuel Johnson in some of my memorandums of the principal planters and favourers of the enclosures, under a name which I took the liberty to invent from the Greek, *Pappadendrion*. Lord Auchinleck and some few more are of the list. I am told that one gentleman in the shire of Aberdeen, *viz*. Sir Archibald Grant, has planted above fifty millions of trees on a piece of very wild ground at Monimusk: I must enquire if he has fenced them well, before he enters my list; for that is the soul of enclosing. I began myself to plant a little, our ground being too valuable for much, and that is now fifty years ago; and the trees, now in my seventy-fourth year, I look up to with reverence, and show them to my eldest son, now in his fifteenth year; and they are the full height of my country-house here, where I had the pleasure of receiving you, and hope again to have that satisfaction with our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell. I shall always continue, with the truest esteem, dear Doctor, &c.

"ALEXANDER DICK." (1)

LETTER 268. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 18. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — It is so long since I heard any thing from you (2), that I am not easy about it: write something to me next post. When you sent your last letter, every thing seemed to be mending; I hope nothing has lately grown worse. I suppose young Alexander continues to thrive, and Veronica is now very pretty company. I do not suppose the lady is yet reconciled to me; yet let her know that I love her very well, and value her very much.

(1) For a character of this very amiable man, see *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 41., and the Biographical Dictionary. He died in 1785.

(2) By the then course of the post, my long letter of the 14th had not yet reached him.

"Dr. Blair is printing some sermons. If they are all like the first, which I have read, they are *sermones aurei, ac auro magis aurei*. It is excellently written both as to doctrine and language. Mr. Watson's book (1) seems to be much esteemed.

"Poor Beauclerk still continues very ill. Langton lives on as he used to do. His children are very pretty, and, I think, his lady loses her Scotch. (2) Paoli I never see.

"I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing, that I lost, as was computed, six-and-thirty ounces of blood in a few days. I am better, but not well. I wish you would be vigilant and get me Graham's 'Telemachus,' that was printed at Glasgow, a very little book; and '*Johnstoni Poemata* (3), another little book, printed at Middleburgh.

"Mrs. Williams sends her compliments, and promises that when you come hither she will accommodate you as well as ever she can in the old room. She wishes to know whether you sent her book to Sir Alexander Gordon. My dear Boswell, do not neglect to write to me; for your kindness is one of the pleasures of my life, which I should be sorry to lose. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 269. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 24. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — Your letter dated the 18th instant, I had the pleasure to receive last post. Although my late long neglect, or rather delay, was truly culpable, I am tempted not to regret it, since it has produced me so valuable a proof of your regard. I did, indeed, during that inexcusable silence, sometimes divert the reproaches

(1) History of Philip the Second.

(2) Lady Rothes was a native of England, but she had lived long in Scotland, and never, it is said, entirely lost the accent she had acquired there. — C.

(3) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 96. — C.

of my own mind, by fancying that I should hear again from you, enquiring with some anxiety about me, because, for aught you knew, I might have been ill.

"You are pleased to show me that my kindness is of some consequence to you. My heart is elated at the thought. Be assured, my dear Sir, that my affection and reverence for you are exalted and steady. I do not believe that a more perfect attachment ever existed in the history of mankind. And it is a noble attachment; for the attractions are genius, learning, and piety.

"Your difficulty of breathing alarms me, and brings into my imagination an event, which, although, in the natural course of things, I must expect at some period, I cannot view with composure.

"My wife is much honoured by what you say of her. She begs you may accept of her best compliments. She is to send you some marmalade of oranges of her own making. I ever am, my dear Sir, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 270. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt-Court, March 8. 1777.

"DEAR MADAM,—As we pass on through the journey of life, we meet, and ought to expect, many unpleasing occurrences, but many likewise encounter us unexpected. I have this morning heard from Lucy of your illness. I heard, indeed, in the next sentence that you are to a great degree recovered. May your recovery, dearest Madam, be complete and lasting! The hopes of paying you the annual visit is one of the few solaces with which my imagination gratifies me, and my wish is, that I may find you happy.

"My health is much broken; my nights are very restless, and will not be made more comfortable by remembering that one of the friends whom I value most is suffering equally with myself. Be pleased, dearest

lady, to let me know how you are; and if writing be troublesome, get dear Mrs. Gastrell to write for you. I hope she is well and able to assist you; and wish that you may so well recover, as to repay her kindness, if she should want you. May you both live long happy together! I am, dear Madam, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 271. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 14. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been much pleased with your late letter, and am glad that my old enemy, Mrs. Boswell, begins to feel some remorse. As to Miss Veronica's Scotch, I think it cannot be helped. An English maid you might easily have; but she would still imitate the greater number, as they would be likewise those whom she must most respect. Her dialect will not be gross. Her mamma has not much Scotch, and you have yourself very little. I hope she knows my name, and does not call me *Johnston*. (1)

"The immediate cause of my writing is this: One Shaw, who seems a modest and a decent man, has written an Erse Grammar, which a very learned Highlander, Macbean, has, at my request, examined and approved. The book is very little, but Mr. Shaw has been persuaded by his friends to set it at half a guinea, though I advised only a crown, and thought myself liberal. You, whom the author considers as a great encourager of ingenious men, will receive a parcel of his proposals and receipts. I have undertaken to give you notice of them, and to solicit your countenance. You must ask no poor man, because the price is really too high. Yet such a work deserves patronage.

(1) *Johnson* is the most common English formation of the surname from *John*; *Johnston* the Scotch. My illustrious friend observed that many North Britons pronounced his name in their own way.—*B.*—The names are radically different: one is patronymic, John's *son*; the other local, John's *town*.—C. 1835.

"It is proposed to augment our club from twenty to thirty, of which I am glad; for as we have several in it whom I do not much like to consort with (1), I am for reducing it to a mere miscellaneous collection of conspicuous men, without any determinate character. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"My respects to madam, to Veronica, to Alexander, to Euphemia, to David."

LETTER 272. TO MRS. ASTON.

"March 15. 1777.

"DEAREST MADAM,—The letter with which I was favoured, by the kindness of Mrs. Gastrell, has contributed very little to quiet my solicitude. I am indeed more frighted than by Mrs. Porter's account. Yet, since you have had strength to conquer your disorder so as to obtain a partial recovery, I think it reasonable to believe, that the favourable season which is now coming forward may restore you to your former health. Do not, dear Madam, lose your courage, nor by despondence or inactivity give way to the disease. Use such exercise as you can bear, and excite cheerful thoughts in your own mind. Do not harass your faculties with laborious attention: nothing is, in my opinion, of more mischievous tendency in a state of body like yours, than deep meditation or perplexing solicitude. Gaiety is a duty, when health requires it. Entertain yourself as you can with small amusements or light conversation, and let nothing but your devotion ever make you serious. But while I exhort you, my dearest lady, to mer-

(1) On account of their differing from him as to religion and politics. — B. — Messrs. Burke, Beauclerk, Fox, &c. It was about this time that Mr. Sheridan, Lord Upper-Ossory, Dr. Marley (afterwards Bishop of Waterford), and Mr. Dunning were admitted. — C.

riment, I am very serious myself. The loss or danger of a friend is not to be considered with indifference; but I derive some consolation from the thought, that you do not languish unattended; that you are not in the hands of strangers or servants, but have a sister at hand to watch your wants and supply them. If, at this distance, I can be of any use, by consulting physicians, or for any other purpose, I hope you will employ me.

"I have thought on a journey to Staffordshire; and hope, in a few weeks, to climb Stow Hill, and to find there the pleasure which I have so often found. Let me hear again from you. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 273. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, April 4. 1777.

(After informing him of the death of my little son David, and that I could not come to London this spring:) "I think it hard that I should be a whole year without seeing you. May I presume to petition for a meeting with you in the autumn? You have, I believe, seen all the cathedrals in England, except that of Carlisle. If you are to be with Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourne, it would not be a great journey to come thither. We may pass a few most agreeable days there by ourselves, and I will accompany you a good part of the way to the southward again. Pray think of this.

"You forget that Mr. Shaw's Erse Grammar was put into your hands by myself last year. Lord Eglingtoune put it into mine. I am glad that Mr. Macbean approves of it. I have received Mr. Shaw's proposals for its publication, which I can perceive are written *by the hand of a master*. . . . . Pray get for me all the editions of 'Walton's Lives.' I have a notion that the

republication of them with notes will fall upon me, between Dr. Horne and Lord Hailes." (1)

Mr. Shaw's Proposals† for an "Analysis of the Scotch Celtic Language" were thus illuminated by the pen of Johnson:—

"Though the Erse dialect of the Celtic language has, from the earliest times, been spoken in Britain, and still subsists in the northern parts and adjacent islands, yet, by the negligence of a people rather warlike than lettered, it has hitherto been left to the caprice and judgment of every speaker, and has floated in the living voice, without the steadiness of analogy, or direction of rules.

An Erse Grammar is an addition to the stores of literature; and its author hopes for the indulgence always shown to those that attempt to do what was never done before. If his work shall be found defective, it is at least all his own: he is not, like other grammarians, a compiler or transcriber; what he delivers, he has learned by attentive observation among his countrymen, who, perhaps, will be themselves surprised to see that speech reduced to principles, which they have used only by imitation.

"The use of this book will, however, not be confined to the mountains and islands: it will afford a pleasing and important subject of speculation to those whose studies lead them to trace the affinity of languages, and the migrations of the ancient races of mankind."

(1) None of the persons here mentioned executed the work which they had in contemplation. Walton's valuable book, however, has been correctly republished in quarto and octavo, with notes and illustrations by the Rev. Mr. Zouch. — M. — It was also printed at the Clarendon press, in 1805, in two volumes, 12mo, and in one vol. 8vo, 1824. — HALL.

LETTER 274. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Glasgow, April 24. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Our worthy friend Thrale's death having appeared in the newspapers, and been afterwards contradicted, I have been placed in a state of very uneasy uncertainty, from which I hoped to be relieved by you; but my hopes have as yet been vain. How could you omit to write to me on such an occasion? I shall wait with anxiety.—I am going to Auchinleck to stay a fortnight with my father. It is better not to be there very long at one time. But frequent renewals of attention are agreeable to him.

"Pray tell me about this edition of 'English Poets, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Author, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D.' which I see advertised. I am delighted with the prospect of it. Indeed, I am happy to feel that I am capable of being so much delighted with literature. But is not the charm of this publication chiefly owing to the *magnum nomen* in the front of it?

"What do you say of Lord Chesterfield's Memoirs and last Letters? (1)

"My wife has made marmalade of oranges for you. I left her and my daughters and Alexander all well yesterday. I have taught Veronica to speak of you thus; Dr. John*son*, not John*ston*.—I remain, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 275. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"May 3. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—The story of Mr. Thrale's death, as he had neither been sick nor in any other danger, made

(1) Dr. Maty's posthumous edition of the Memoirs and Miscellaneous Works of Lord Chesterfield, published by Mr. Justamond early in 1777.—C.

so little impression upon me, that I never thought about obviating its effects* on any body else. It is supposed to have been produced by the English custom (1) of making April fools; that is, of sending one another on some foolish errand on the first of April.

"Tell Mrs. Boswell that I shall taste her marmalade cautiously at first. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.* Beware, says the Italian proverb, of a reconciled enemy. But when I find it does me no harm, I shall then receive it, and be thankful for it, as a pledge of firm, and, I hope of unalterable kindness. She is, after all, a dear, dear lady.

"Please to return Dr. Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well.

"Your frequent visits to Auchinleck, and your short stay there, are very laudable and very judicious. Your present concord with your father gives me great pleasure; it was all that you seemed to want.

"My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.

"Make my compliments to Miss Veronica; I must leave it to *her* philosophy to comfort you for the loss of little David. You must remember, that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs. Thrale has but four out of eleven.

"I am engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of the English Poets. I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson; and if you could give me some information about him, for the life which we have is very scanty, I should be glad.—I am, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Not merely an English custom—the French have the same; but what we call *April fools* they term "*poisson* d'Avril. —C.

To those who delight in tracing the progress of works of literature, it will be an entertainment to compare the limited design with the ample execution of that admirable performance, "The Lives of the English Poets," which is the richest, most beautiful, and, indeed, most perfect production of Johnson's pen. His notion of it at this time appears in the preceding letter. He has a memorandum in this year: —

"May 29., Easter-eve, I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long." (Pr. and Med. p. 155.)

The bargain was concerning that undertaking; but his tender conscience seems alarmed, lest it should have intruded too much on his devout preparation for the solemnity of the ensuing day. But, indeed, very little time was necessary for Johnson's concluding a treaty with the booksellers; as he had, I believe, less attention to profit from his labours, than any man to whom literature has been a profession. I shall here insert, from a letter to me from my late worthy friend Mr. Edward Dilly, though of a later date, an account of this plan so happily conceived, since it was the occasion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the best biography and criticism of which our language can boast.

LETTER 276. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Southill, Sept. 20. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — You find by this letter, that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London, as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to

find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr. Johnson: I have no doubt your stock is much increased by the interview; few men, nay, I may say, scarcely any man has got that fund of knowledge and entertainment as Dr. Johnson in conversation. When he opens freely, every one is attentive to what he says, and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure.

"The edition of the poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press; and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to any thing that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the poets, printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them: not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

"Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion: and, on consulting together, agreed, that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'The English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Samuel Johnson; and that three

persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the 'Lives,' viz. T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal.

"As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own: he mentioned two hundred guineas (1); it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c.; so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, &c. &c. My brother will give you a list of the poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them: the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence.

"I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

"EDWARD DILLY."

I shall afterwards have occasion to consider the extensive and varied range which Johnson took, when he was once led upon ground which he trod with a peculiar delight, having long been intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of it that could interest and please.

(1) Johnson's moderation in demanding so small a sum is extraordinary. Had he asked one thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it. They have probably got five thousand guineas by this work in the course of twenty-five years. — M. — It must be recollected that Johnson at first intended very short prefaces — he afterwards expanded his design. — C.

LETTER 277. TO CHARLES O'CONNOR, ESQ. (1)

"May 19. 1777.

"SIR, — Having had the pleasure of conversing with Dr. Campbell about your character and your literary undertaking, I am resolved to gratify myself by renewing a correspondence which began and ended a great while ago, and ended, I am afraid, by my fault; a fault which, if you have not forgotten it, you must now forgive.

"If I have ever disappointed you, give me leave to tell you that you have likewise disappointed me. I expected great discoveries in Irish antiquity, and large publications in the Irish language; but the world still remains as it was, doubtful and ignorant. What the Irish language is in itself, and to what languages it has affinity, are very interesting questions, which every man wishes to see resolved that has any philological or historical curiosity. Dr. Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact inquiry are those times (*for* such there were) (2) when Ireland was the school

(1) Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker, of the treasury, Dublin, who obligingly communicated to me this and a former letter from Dr. Johnson to the same gentleman (for which see Vol. II. p. 76.), writes to me as follows: — "Perhaps it would gratify you to have some account of Mr. O'Connor. He is an amiable, learned, venerable old gentleman, of an independent fortune, who lives at Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon: he is an admired writer, and member of the Irish Academy. The above letter is alluded to in the preface to the second edition of his 'Dissert.' p. 3." Mr. O'Connor afterwards died at the age of eighty-two, July 1. 1791. See a well-drawn character of him in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for August, 1791.

(2) In Anderson's "Sketches of the Native Irish," p. 5. ed. 1828, there is on these words, "FOR *such there were*," the following note: "These words were misquoted by Dr. Campbell in his strictures, 'IF *such there were*,' although he was actually the bearer of the letter to O'Connor." I confess that Dr. Campbell's reading seems the more probable of the two. — C.

of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it, therefore, if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity. — I am, Sir, your humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

Early in this year came out, in two volumes quarto, the posthumous works of the learned Dr. Zachary Pearce, bishop of Rochester; being "A Commentary, with Notes, on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles," with other theological pieces. Johnson had now an opportunity of making a grateful return to that excellent prelate (1), who, we have seen, was the only person who gave him any assistance in the compilation of his dictionary. The bishop had left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions †, and also furnished to the editor, the Rev. Mr. Derby(2), a dedication †, which

(1) Mrs. Thrale, in one of her letters, repeats a curious anecdote of this prelate, which she probably had from Dr. Johnson himself: "We will act as Dr. Zachary Pearce, the famous bishop of Rochester, did, when he lost the wife he so much loved — call for one glass to the health of her who is departed never more to return, and then go quietly back to the usual duties of life, and forbear to mention her again from that time to the last day of it." — *Lett.* v. ii. p. 213. But he survived his lady but a few months, and his death was (if not occasioned) certainly accelerated by her loss. She died 23d Oct. 1773, and he 29th June, 1774, after a union of fifty-one years. — C.

(2) Rector of Southfleet and Longfield in Kent. He had married Bishop Pearce's niece. Johnson, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, says, "My clerical friend Derby is dead." He died in 1778. — C.

I shall here insert: both because it will appear at this time with peculiar propriety, and because it will tend to propagate and increase that "fervour of *loyalty*," which in me, who boast of the name of Tory, is not only a principle, but a passion.

"*To the King.*

"SIR,—I presume to lay before your majesty the last labours of a learned bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards; and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him, makes it now fit to be remembered, that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your majesty.

"The tumultuary life of princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest, without losing sight of private merit; to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and the humblest of mankind; and to be at once amiable and great.

"Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence! and as posterity may learn from your majesty how kings should live, may they learn likewise from your people how they should be honoured! —I am, may it please your majesty, with the most profound respect, your majesty's most dutiful and devoted subject and servant."

In the summer he wrote a prologue *, which was spoken before "A Word to the Wise," a comedy by Mr. Hugh Kelly, which had been brought upon the stage in 1770; but he being a writer for ministry in one of the newspapers, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and, in the playhouse phrase, was *damned*. By the generosity of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of

Covent-garden theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the author's widow and children. To conciliate the favour of the audience was the intention of Johnson's prologue, which, as it is not long, I shall here insert, as a proof that his poetical talents were in no degree impaired.

"This night presents a play, which public rage,
Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage:
From zeal or malice now no more we dread,
For English vengeance *wars not with the dead.*
A generous foe regards with pitying eye
The man whom fate has laid where all must lie.
To wit, reviving from its author's dust,
Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just:
Let no renewed hostilities invade
Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade.
Let one great payment every claim appease,
And him who cannot hurt, allow to please;
To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
By harmless merriment or useful sense.
Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
Approve it only; — 'tis too late too praise.
If want of skill or want of care appear,
Forbear to hiss; — the poet cannot hear.
By all, like him, must praise and blame be found,
At last, a fleeting gleam or empty sound:
Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night
When liberal pity dignified delight;
When pleasure fired her torch at virtue's flame,
And mirth was bounty with an humbler name." (1)

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(1) Mr. Murphy related in Dr. Johnson's hearing one day, and he did not deny it, that when Murphy joked him for having been so diligent of late between Dodd's sermon and Kelly's prologue, Dr. Johnson replied, "Why, Sir, when they come to me with a dead staymaker and a dying parson, what can a man do?" — Piozzi.

CHAPTER VIII.

1777.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.—Savage's "Sir Thomas Overbury."—Thomson.—Mrs. Strickland.—The Townley Collection.—Dr. Dodd.—Boswell at the Tomb of Melancthon.—Isaac De Groot.—Dr. Watts.—Letter to Mrs. Boswell.—Visit to Ashbourne.—"Harry Jackson."—Sidney's "Arcadia."—Projected Trip to the Baltic.—Grief for the Loss of Relatives and Friends.—Incomes of Curates.—Johnson's humane and zealous Interference in behalf of Dr. Dodd.

A CIRCUMSTANCE which could not fail to be very pleasing to Johnson occurred this year. The tragedy of "Sir Thomas Overbury," written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought out with alterations at Drury-lane theatre. (1) The prologue to it was written by Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan; in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

> "Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was given
> No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heaven,"

he introduced an elegant compliment to Johnson on

(1) Our author has here fallen into a slight mistake. The prologue to this revived tragedy being written by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Boswell very naturally supposed that it was performed at Drury-lane theatre. But in fact, as Mr. Kemble observes to me, it was acted at the theatre in Covent-garden.—M.

his Dictionary, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised; of which Mr. Harris, in his "Philological Inquiries (part i. chap. iv.), justly and liberally observes, "Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work." The concluding lines of this prologue were these:—

> "So pleads the tale (1) that gives to future times
> The son's misfortunes and the parent's crimes;
> There shall his fame (if own'd to-night) survive,
> Fix'd by the hand that bids our language live."

Mr. Sheridan here at once did honour to his taste and to his liberality of sentiment, by showing that he was not prejudiced from the unlucky difference which had taken place between his worthy father and Dr. Johnson. (2) I have already mentioned that Johnson was very desirous of reconciliation with old Mr. Sheridan. It will, therefore, not seem at all surprising that he was zealous in acknowledging the brilliant merit of his son. While it had as yet been displayed only in the drama, Johnson proposed him as a member of the Literary Club, observing, that "He who has written the two best (3) comedies

(1) "Life of Richard Savage, by Dr. Johnson."—SHERIDAN.

(2) He likewise made some retribution to Dr. Johnson for the attack he had meditated, about two years before, on the pamphlet he had published about the American question, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny." Some fragments found among Sheridan's papers show that he had intended answering this pamphlet in no very courteous way. See *Moore's Life*, vol. i. p. 152.—HALL.

(3) ["Whatever Sheridan has done has been, *par excellence*, always the *best* of its kind. He has written the *best* comedy (School for Scandal), the *best* drama (the Duenna, in my mind, far before the Beggar's Opera), the *best* farce (the Critic), and

of his age is surely a considerable man." And he had, accordingly, the honour to be elected; for an honour it undoubtedly must be allowed to be, when it is considered of whom that society consists, and that a single black ball excludes a candidate.

LETTER 278. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"July 9. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR, — For the health of my wife and children I have taken the little country-house at which you visited my uncle, Dr. Boswell, who, having lost his wife, is gone to live with his son. We took possession of our villa about a week ago. We have a garden of three quarters of an acre, well stocked with fruit-trees and flowers, and gooseberries and currants, and pease and beans, and cabbages, &c. &c., and my children are quite happy. I now write to you in a little study, from the window of which I see around me a verdant grove, and beyond it the lofty mountain called *Arthur's Seat*.

"Your last letter, in which you desire me to send you some additional information concerning Thomson, reached me very fortunately just as I was going to Lanark, to put my wife's two nephews, the young Campbells, to school there, under the care of Mr. Thomson, the master of it, whose wife is sister to the author of 'The Seasons.' She is an old woman; but her memory is very good; and she will with pleasure give me for you every particular that you wish to know, and she can tell. Pray then take the trouble to send me such questions as may lead to biographical materials. You say that the Life which we have of Thomson is scanty. Since I received your letter, I have read his Life, pub-

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the *best* Address (Monologue on Garrick); and, to crown all, delivered the very *best* oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country." — BYRON.]

lished under the name of Cibber, but, as you told me really written by a Mr. Shiels (1); that written by Dr. Murdoch; one prefixed to an edition of the 'Seasons, published at Edinburgh, which is compounded of both, with the addition of an anecdote of Quin's relieving Thomson from prison; the abridgement of Murdoch's account of him, in the 'Biographia Britannica,' and another abridgement of it in the 'Biographical Dictionary;' enriched with Dr. Joseph Warton's critical panegyric on the 'Seasons,' in his 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope:' from all these it appears to me that we have a pretty full account of this poet. However, you will, I doubt not, show me many blanks, and I shall do what can be done to have them filled up. As Thomson never returned to Scotland (which *you* will think very wise), his sister can speak from her own knowledge only as to the early part of his life. She has some letters from him, which may probably give light as to his more advanced progress, if she will let us see them, which I suppose she will. I believe George Lewis Scott (2) and Dr. Armstrong are now his only surviving companions, while he lived in and about London; and they, I dare say, can tell more of him than is yet known. My own notion is, that Thomson was a much coarser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His 'Seasons' are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments; but a rank soil, nay, a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.

"Your edition (3) of the 'English Poets' will be

(1) See *antè*, p. 149. It is particularly observable that the Life of Thomson which Mr. Boswell here represents Johnson as stating to have been especially written by Shiels, bears strong marks of having been written by Theophilus Cibber. — C.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 224.

(3) Dr. Johnson was not the *editor* of this collection of the English Poets; he merely furnished the biographical prefaces with which it is enriched, as is rightly stated in a subsequent page. He, indeed, from a virtuous motive, recommended the

very valuable on account of the 'Prefaces and Lives. But I have seen a specimen of an edition of the Poets at the Apollo press, at Edinburgh, which, for excellence in printing and engraving, highly deserves a liberal encouragement.

"Most sincerely do I regret the bad health and bad rest with which you have been afflicted; and I hope you are better. I cannot believe that the prologue which you generously gave to Mr. Kelly's widow and children the other day is the effusion of one in sickness and in disquietude: but external circumstances are never sure indications of the state of man. I send you a letter which I wrote to you two years ago at Wilton; and did not send it at the time, for fear of being reproved as indulging too much tenderness, and one written to you at the tomb of Melancthon, which I kept back, lest I should appear at once too superstitious and too enthusiastic. I now imagine that perhaps they may please you.

"You do not take the least notice of my proposal for our meeting at Carlisle.(1) Though I have meri-

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works of four or five poets (whom he has named) to be added to the collection; but he is no otherwise answerable for any which are found there, or any which are omitted. The poems of Goldsmith (whose life I know he intended to write, for I collected some materials for it by his desire,) were omitted in consequence of a petty exclusive interest in some of them, vested in Mr. Carnan, a bookseller. — M.

(1) Dr. Johnson had himself talked of our seeing Carlisle together. *High* was a favourite word of his to denote a person of rank. He said to me, "Sir, I believe we may meet at the house of a Roman Catholic lady in Cumberland; a high lady, Sir." I afterwards discovered that he meant Mrs. Strickland [see *antè*, p. 15.], sister of Charles Townley, Esq. whose very noble collection of statues and pictures is not more to be admired, than his extraordinary and polite readiness in showing it, which I and several of my friends have agreeably experienced. They who are possessed of valuable stores of gratification to persons of taste should exercise their benevolence in imparting

toriously refrained from visiting London this year, I ask you if it would not be wrong that I should be two years without having the benefit of your conversation, when, if you come down as far as Derbyshire, we may meet at the expense of a few days' journeying and not many pounds. I wish you to see Carlisle, which made me mention that place. But if you have not a desire to complete your tour of the English cathedrals, I will take a larger share of the road between this place and Ashbourne. So tell me where you will fix for our passing a few days by ourselves. Now don't cry 'foolish fellow,' or 'idle dog.' Chain your humour, and let your kindness play.

"You will rejoice to hear that Miss Macleod (1), of Rasay, is married to Colonel Mure Campbell, an excellent man, with a pretty good estate of his own, and the prospect of having the Earl of Loudoun's fortune and honours. Is not this a noble lot for our fair Hebridean? How happy am I that she is to be in Ayrshire! We shall have the Laird of Rasay, and old Malcolm, and I know not how many gallant Macleods, and bagpipes, &c. &c. at Auchinleck. Perhaps you may meet them all there.

"Without doubt you have read what is called 'The *Life* of David Hume,' written by himself, with the letter from Adam Smith subjoined to it. Is not this an age of daring effrontery? My friend Mr. Anderson, professor of natural philosophy at Glasgow, at whose house you and I supped, and to whose care Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, was intrusted at that university, paid me a visit lately; and after we had talked with indignation and contempt of the poisonous productions

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the pleasure. Grateful acknowledgments are due to Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq. for the liberal access which he is pleased to allow to his exquisite collection of pictures.

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 195. — C.

with which this age is infested, he said there was now an excellent opportunity for Dr. Johnson to step forth. I agreed with him that you might knock Hume's and Smith's heads together, and make vain and ostentatious infidelity exceedingly ridiculous. Would it not be worth your while to crush such noxious weeds in the moral garden?

"You have said nothing to me of Dr. Dodd. (1) I know not how you think on that subject; though the newspapers give us a saying of yours in favour of mercy to him. But I own I am very desirous that the royal prerogative of remission of punishment should be employed to exhibit an illustrious instance of the regard which God's *Vicegerent* will ever show to piety and virtue. If for ten righteous men the Almighty would have spared Sodom, shall not a thousand acts of goodness done by Dr. Dodd counterbalance one crime? Such an instance would do more to encourage goodness, than his execution would do to deter from vice. I am not afraid of any bad consequence to society; for who will persevere for a long course of years in a distinguished discharge of religious duties with a view to commit a forgery with impunity?

"Pray make my best compliments acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by assuring them of my hearty joy that the *master*, as you call him, is alive. I hope I shall often taste his champagne — *soberly*.

"I have not heard from Langton for a long time. I suppose he is as usual,

'Studious the busy moments to deceive.'

"I remain, my dear Sir, your most affectionate, &c.
"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 23d of June, I again wrote to Dr. John-

(1) The whole story of Dodd is told in detail, *post*, 15th Sept. 1777. See p. 275. — C.

son, enclosing a shipmaster's receipt for a jar of orange-marmalade, and a large packet of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland."

LETTER 279. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"June 28. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — I have just received your packet from Mr. Thrale's, but have not daylight enough to look much into it. I am glad that I have credit enough with Lord Hailes to be trusted with more copy. I hope to take more care of it than of the last. I return Mrs. Boswell my affectionate thanks for her present, which I value as a token of reconciliation.

"Poor Dodd was put to death yesterday, in opposition to the recommendation of the jury, — the petition of the city of London, — and a subsequent petition signed by three-and-twenty thousand hands. Surely the voice of the public, when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.

"The saying that was given me in the papers I never spoke; but I wrote many of his petitions, and some of his letters. He applied to me very often. He was, I am afraid, long flattered with hopes of life; but I had no part in the dreadful delusion; for as soon as the king had signed his sentence, I obtained from Mr. Chamier (1) an account of the disposition of the court towards him, with a declaration that there *was no hope even of a respite.* This letter immediately was laid before Dodd; but he believed those whom he wished to be right, as it is thought, till within three days of his end. He died with pious composure and resolution. I have just seen the ordinary that attended him. His address to his fellow-convicts offended the methodists; but he had a Moravian with him much of his time. His moral cha-

(1) Mr. Chamier was then Under-Secretary of State. — C.

racter is very bad: I hope all is not true that is charged upon him. Of his behaviour in prison an account will be published.

"I give you joy of your country-house and your pretty garden, and hope some time to see you in your felicity. I was much pleased with your two letters that had been kept so long in store (1); and rejoice at Miss Rasay's advancement, and wish Sir Allan success.

"I hope to meet you somewhere towards the north,

(1) Since they have been so much honoured by Dr. Johnson, I shall here insert them: —

LETTER 280. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Sunday, Sept. 30. 1764.

"MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED SIR, — You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I resemble Mr. Johnson. You will be agreeably surprised, when you learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittemberg, in Saxony. I am in the old church where the reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr Johnson from the tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the church; but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her 'to keep to the old religion.' At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy: and if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory; and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May God, the father of all beings, ever bless you! and may you continue to love your most affectionate friend and devoted servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 281. FROM THE SAME.

"Wilton-house, April 22. 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR, — Every scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me, 'there is no certain happiness in this state of being.' I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's; and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London we should have a day fixed every week to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the gaiety which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you; a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and in Parnell's 'Contentment,' I find the only sure means of enjoying happiness; or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection, most faithfully yours, JAMES BOSWELL."

but am loath to come quite to Carlisle. Can we not meet at Manchester? But we will settle it in some other letters.

"Mr. Seward (1), a great favourite at Streatham, has been, I think, enkindled by our travels with a curiosity to see the Highlands. I have given him letters to you and Beattie. He desires that a lodging may be taken for him at Edinburgh against his arrival. He is just setting out. Langton has been exercising the militia. Mrs. Williams is, I fear, declining. Dr. Lawrence says he can do no more. She is gone to summer in the country, with as many conveniences about her as she can expect; but I have no great hope. We must all die: may we all be prepared!

"I suppose Miss Boswell reads her book, and young Alexander takes to his learning. Let me hear about them; for every thing that belongs to you, belongs in a more remote degree, and not, I hope, very remote, to, dear Sir, yours affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 282. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"June 24. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — This gentleman is a great favourite at Streatham, and, therefore, you will easily believe that he has very valuable qualities. Our narrative has kindled him with a desire of visiting the Highlands, after having already seen a great part of Europe. You must receive him as a friend, and when you have directed him to the curiosities of Edinburgh, give him instructions and recommendations for the rest of his journey. I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson's benevolence to the unfortunate was, I am confident, as steady and active as that of any of

(1) [William Seward, Esq. editor of "Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons," &c. See *antè*, Vol. III. p. 76.]

those who have been most eminently distinguished for that virtue. Innumerable proofs of it I have no doubt will be for ever concealed from mortal eyes. We may, however, form some judgment of it from the many and various instances which have been discovered. One, which happened in the course of this summer, is remarkable from the name and connection of the person who was the object of it. The circumstance to which I allude is ascertained by two letters, one to Mr. Langton, and another to the Rev. Dr. Vyse, rector of Lambeth, son of the respectable clergyman at Lichfield, who was contemporary with Johnson, and in whose father's family Johnson had the happiness of being kindly received in his early years.

LETTER 283. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"June 29. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — I have lately been much disordered by a difficulty of breathing, but am now better. I hope your house is well.

"You know we have been talking lately of St. Cross, at Winchester (1): I have an old acquaintance whose distress makes him very desirous of an hospital, and I am afraid I have not strength enough to get him into the Chartreux. He is a painter, who never rose higher than to get his immediate living; and from that, at eighty-three, he is disabled by a slight stroke of the palsy, such as does not make him at all helpless on common occasions, though his hand is not steady enough for his art. My request is, that you will try to obtain a promise of the next vacancy from the Bishop of

(1) See antè, Vol. II. p. 301. — C.

Chester. It is not a great thing to ask, and I hope we shall obtain it. Dr. Warton has promised to favour him with his notice, and I hope he may end his days in peace. I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 284. TO THE REV. DR. VYSE.

"July 9. 1777.

"SIR, — I doubt not but you will readily forgive me for taking the liberty of requesting your assistance in recommending an old friend to his grace the archbishop as governor of the Charterhouse. His name is De Groot (1); he was born at Gloucester; I have known him many years. He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm to a great degree. He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar can refuse attention; he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him from whom perhaps every man of learning has learnt something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused. I am, reverend Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 285. TO THE REV. DR. VYSE.

"July 22. 1777.

"If any notice should be taken of the recommendation which I took the liberty of sending you, it will be necessary to know that Mr. De Groot is to be found at No. 8. in Pye-street, Westminster. This information, when I wrote, I could not give you; and being going soon to Lichfield, think it necessary to be left behind me. More I will not say. You will want no persuasion to succour the nephew of Grotius. I am, Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) It appears that Isaac de Groot was admitted into the Charterhouse, where he died Feb. 8. 1779. The Gent. Mag. in announcing his death, calls him "the great-grandson of the learned Grotius." — C.

LETTER 286. DR. VYSE TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Lambeth, June 9. 1787.

"SIR, — I have searched in vain for the letter which I spoke of, and which I wished, at your desire, to communicate to you. It was from Dr. Johnson, to return me thanks for my application to Archbishop Cornwallis in favour of poor De Groot. He rejoices at the success it met with, and is lavish in the praise he bestows upon his favourite, Hugo Grotius. I am really sorry that I cannot find this letter, as it is worthy of the writer. That which I send you enclosed (1) is at your service. It is very short, and will not perhaps be thought of any consequence, unless you should judge proper to consider it as a proof of the very humane part which Dr. Johnson took in behalf of a distressed and deserving person. I am, Sir, &c. W. VYSE (2)."

LETTER 287. TO MR. EDWARD DILLY.

"Bolt Court, July 7. 1777.

"SIR, — To the collection of English poets I have recommended the volume of Dr. Watts to be added: his name has long been held by me in veneration, and I would not willingly be reduced to tell of him only that he was born and died. Yet of his life I know very little, and therefore must pass him in a manner very un-

(1) The preceding letter.

(2) Dr. Vyse, at my request, was so obliging as once more to endeavour to recover the letter of Johnson to which he alludes, but without success; for, April 23. 1800, he wrote to me thus: "I have again searched, but in vain, for one of his letters, in which he speaks in his own nervous style of Hugo Grotius. De Groot was clearly a descendant of the family of Grotius, and Archbishop Cornwallis willingly complied with Dr. Johnson's request." — M. — These letters appear in the Gent. Mag. 1787 and 1799, dated from London only, and seem to have been addressed to Mr. Sharpe. — C.

worthy of his character, unless some of his friends will favour me with the necessary information. Many of them must be known to you; and by your influence perhaps I may obtain some instruction: my plan does not exact much; but I wish to distinguish Watts, a man who never wrote but for a good purpose. Be pleased to do for me what you can. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 288. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 15. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The fate of poor Dr. Dodd made a dismal impression upon my mind. I had sagacity enough to divine that you wrote his speech to the recorder, before sentence was pronounced. I am glad you have written so much for him; and I hope to be favoured with an exact list of the several pieces when we meet.

"I received Mr. Seward as the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and as a gentleman recommended by Dr. Johnson to my attention. I have introduced him to Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Mr. Nairne. He is gone to the Highlands with Dr. Gregory; when he returns I shall do more for him.

"Sir Allan Maclean has carried that branch of his cause, of which we had good hopes; the president and one other judge only were against him. I wish the house of lords may do as well as the court of session has done. But Sir Allan has not the lands of *Brolos* quite cleared by this judgment, till a long account is made up of debts and interests on the one side, and rents on the other. I am, however, not much afraid of the balance.

"Macquarry's estates, Staffa and all, were sold yesterday, and bought by a Campbell. I fear he will have little or nothing left out of the purchase-money

"I send you the case against the negro, by Mr. Cullen, son to Dr. Cullen, in opposition to Maclaurin's for liberty, of which you have approved. Pray read this, and tell me what you think as a *politician*, as well as a *poet*, upon the subject.

"Be so kind as to let me know how your time is to be distributed next autumn. I will meet you at Manchester, or where you please; but I wish you would complete your tour of the cathedrals, and come to Carlisle, and I will accompany you a part of the way homewards. I am ever, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 289. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"July 22. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—Your notion of the necessity of any early interview is very pleasing to both my vanity and tenderness. I shall, perhaps, come to Carlisle another year; but my money has not held out so well as it used to do. I shall go to Ashbourne, and I purpose to make Dr. Taylor invite you. If you live awhile with me at his house, we shall have much time to ourselves, and our stay will be no expence to us or him. I shall leave London the 28th; and, after some stay at Oxford and Lichfield, shall probably come to Ashbourne about the end of your session; but of all this you shall have notice. Be satisfied we will meet somewhere. What passed between me and poor Dr. Dodd, you shall know more fully when we meet.

"Of lawsuits there is no end: poor Sir Allan must have another trial; for which, however, his antagonist cannot be much blamed, having two judges on his side. I am more afraid of the debts than of the house of lords. It is scarcely to be imagined to what debts will swell, that are daily increasing by small additions, and how carelessly in a state of desperation debts are contracted. Poor Macquarry was far from thinking that

when he sold his islands he should receive nothing. For what were they sold? and what was their yearly value? The admission of money into the Highlands will soon put an end to the feudal modes of life, by making those men landlords who were not chiefs. I do not know that the people will suffer by the change; but there was in the patriarchal authority something venerable and pleasing. Every eye must look with pain on a *Campbell* turning the *Macquarries* at will out of their *sedes avitæ*, their hereditary island.

"Sir Alexander Dick is the only Scotsman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees where trees were not. I was much delighted by his kind letter.

"I remember Rasay with too much pleasure not to partake of the happiness of any part of that amiable family. Our ramble in the Highlands hangs upon my imagination: I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again. Pennant seems to have seen a great deal which we did not see: when we travel again let us look better about us.

"You have done right in taking your uncle's house. Some change in the form of life gives from time to time a new epocha of existence. In a new place there is something new to be done, and a different system of thought rises in the mind. I wish I could gather currants in your garden. Now fit up a little study, and have your books ready at hand: do not spare a little money, to make your habitation pleasing to yourself.

"I have dined lately with poor dear Langton. I do not think he goes on well. His table is rather coarse, and he has his children too much about him.(1) But he is a very good man.

(1) This very just remark I hope will be constantly held in remembrance by parents, who are in general too apt to indulge their own fond feelings for their children at the expense of their friends. The common custom of introducing them after dinner

"Mrs. Williams is in the country, to try if she can improve her health: she is very ill. Matters have come so about, that she is in the country with very good accommodation; but age, and sickness, and pride, have made her so peevish, that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week over her wages.

"Our club ended its session about six weeks ago. We now only meet to dine once a fortnight. Mr. Dunning, the great lawyer(1), is one of our members. The Thrales are well.—I long to know how the negro's cause will be decided. What is the opinion of Lord Auchinleck, or Lord Hailes, or Lord Monboddo?

"I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 290. TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"July 22. 1777.

"MADAM,—Though I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it. I received it as a token of friendship, as a proof of reconciliation, things much sweeter than sweetmeats; and upon this consideration I return you, dear Madam, my sincerest thanks. By having your kindness I think I have a double security for the continuance of Mr. Boswell's, which it is not to be expected that any man can long keep, when the influence of a lady so highly and so justly valued operates against him. Mr. Boswell will tell you that I was always faithful to your interest, and always endeavoured to

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as highly injudicious. It is agreeable enough that they should appear at any other time; but they should not be suffered to poison the moments of festivity by attracting the attention of the company, and in a manner compelling them from politeness to say what they do not think.

(1) Created in 1782 Lord Ashburton.—C.

exalt you in his estimation. You must now do the same for me. We must all help one another, and you must now consider me as, dear Madam, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 291. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 28. 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This is the day on which you were to leave London, and I have been amusing myself in the intervals of my law-drudgery with figuring you in the Oxford post-coach. I doubt, however, if you have had so merry a journey as you and I had in that vehicle last year, when you made me so much sport with Gwyn, the architect. Incidents upon a journey are recollected with peculiar pleasure: they are preserved in brisk spirits, and come up again in our minds, tinctured with that gaiety, or at least that animation, with which we first perceived them." (I added, that something had occurred which I was afraid might prevent me from meeting him (1); and that my wife had been affected with complaints which threatened a consumption, but was now better.)

LETTER 292. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Oxford, Aug. 4. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—Do not disturb yourself about our interviews; I hope we shall have many: nor think it any thing hard or unusual that your design of meeting me is interrupted. We have both endured greater evils, and have greater evils to expect.

(1) "Aug. 4. 1777.—Boswell's project is disconcerted by a visit from a relation of Yorkshire, whom he mentions as the head of his clan. Bozzy, you know, makes a huge bustle about all his own motions and all mine. I have enclosed a letter to pacify him, and reconcile him to the uncertainties of human life."—*Lett. to Mr. Thrale.*

"Mrs. Boswell's illness makes a more serious distress. Does the blood rise from her lungs or from her stomach? From little vessels broken in the stomach there is no danger. Blood from the lungs is, I believe, always frothy, as mixed with wind. Your physicians know very well what is to be done. The loss of such a lady would, indeed, be very afflictive, and I hope she is in no danger. Take care to keep her mind as easy as possible.

"I have left Langton in London. He has been down with the militia, and is again quiet at home, talking to his little people, as I suppose you do sometimes. Make my compliments to Miss Veronica.(1) The rest are too young for ceremony.

"I cannot but hope that you have taken your country-house at a very seasonable time, and that it may conduce to restore or establish Mrs. Boswell's health, as well as provide room and exercise for the young ones. That you and your lady may both be happy, and long enjoy your happiness, is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear Sir, your most, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

TO DR. JOHNSON.

(Informing him that my wife had continued to grow better, so that my alarming apprehensions were relieved: and that I hoped to disengage myself from the other embarrassment which had occurred, and therefore requesting to know particularly when he intended to be at Ashbourne.)

LETTER 293. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Aug. 30. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I am this day come to Ashbourne, and have only to tell you, that Dr. Taylor says you shall be welcome to him, and you know how welcome

(1) This young lady, the author's eldest daughter, and at this time about five years old, died in London, of a consumption, four months after her father, Sept. 26. 1795.—M.

you will be to me. Make haste to let me know when you may be expected. Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, and tell her I hope we shall be at variance no more. I am, dear Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 294. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 1. 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—On Saturday I wrote a very short letter, immediately upon my arrival hither, to show you that I am not less desirous of the interview than yourself. Life admits not of delays; when pleasure can be had, it is fit to catch it: every hour takes away part of the things that please us, and, perhaps, part of our disposition to be pleased. When I came to Lichfield, I found my old friend Harry Jackson dead.(1) It was a loss, and a loss not to be repaired, as he was one of the companions of my childhood. I hope we may long continue to gain friends; but the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us are not able to supply the place of old acquaintance, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight. If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean Journey. In the meantime it may not be amiss to contrive some other little adventure, but what it can be I know not; leave it, as Sidney says,

'To virtue, fortune, time, and woman's breast (2);

(1) See *antè*, p. 95. He says in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, "Lichfield, 7th August, 1777.—At Birmingham I heard of the death of an old friend, and at Lichfield of the death of another. *Anni prædantur euntes.* One was a little older, and the other a little younger, than myself." The "Lichfield friend" probably was Jackson.—C.

(2) "Who doth desire that chaste his wife should bee,
First be he true, for truth doth truth deserve;
Then be he such, as she his worth may see,
And, alwaies one, credit with her preserve;

for I believe Mrs. Boswell must have some part in the consultation. One thing you will like. The doctor, so far as I can judge, is likely to leave us enough to ourselves. He was out to-day before I came down, and, I fancy, will stay out to dinner. I have brought the papers about poor Dodd, to show you, but you will soon have despatched them.

"Before I came away, I sent poor Mrs. Williams into the country, very ill of a pituitous defluxion, which wastes her gradually away, and which her physician declares himself unable to stop. I supplied her as far as could be desired with all conveniences to make her excursion and abode pleasant and useful. But I am afraid she can only linger a short time in a morbid state of weakness and pain.

"The Thrales, little and great, are all well, and purpose to go to Brighthelmstone at Michaelmas. They will invite me to go with them, and, perhaps, I may go, but I hardly think I shall like to stay the whole time; but of futurity we know but little.

"Mrs. Porter is well; but Mrs. Aston, one of the ladies at Stow-hill, has been struck with a palsy, from which she is not likely ever to recover. How soon may such a stroke fall upon us!

Write to me, and let us know when we may expect you. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Not toying kynd, nor causelessly unkynd,
  Not stirring thoughts, nor yet denying right,
Nor spying faults, nor in plaine errors blind,
  Never hard hand, nor ever rayns (reins) too light;
As far from want, as far from vaine expence,
  Th' one doth enforce, the t'other doth entice:
Allow good companie, but drive from thence
  All filthie mouths that glorie in their vice;
This done, thou hast no more but leave the rest
  To nature, fortune, time, and woman's breast."

Sidney's Arcadia.—]

LETTER 295. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 9. 1777.

(After informing him that I was to set out next day, in order to meet him at Ashbourne: —) "I have a present for you from Lord Hailes; the fifth book of 'Lactantius,' which he has published with Latin notes. He is also to give you a few anecdotes for your 'Life of Thomson,' who I find was private tutor to the present Earl of Hadington, Lord Hailes's cousin, a circumstance not mentioned by Dr. Murdoch. I have keen expectations of delight from your edition of the English Poets.

"I am sorry for poor Mrs. Williams's situation. You will, however, have the comfort of reflecting on your kindness to her. Mr. Jackson's death, and Mrs. Aston's palsy, are gloomy circumstances. Yet surely we should be habituated to the uncertainty of life and health. When my mind is unclouded by melancholy, I consider the temporary distresses of this state of being as 'light afflictions,' by stretching my mental view into that glorious after-existence, when they will appear to be as nothing. But present pleasures and present pains must be felt. I lately read 'Rasselas' over again with satisfaction.

"Since you are desirous to hear about Macquarry's sale, I shall inform you particularly. The gentleman who purchased Ulva is Mr. Campbell of Auchnaba: our friend Macquarry was proprietor of two-thirds of it, of which the rent was 156*l.* 5*s.* 1½*d.* This parcel was set up at 4069*l.* 5*s.* 1*d.*, but it sold for no less than 5540*l.* The other third of Ulva, with the island of Staffa, belonged to Macquarry of Ormaig. Its rent, including that of Staffa, 83*l.* 12*s.* 2½*d.*—set up at 2178*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*—sold for no less than 3540*l.* The Laird of Col wished to purchase Ulva, but he thought

the price too high. There may, indeed, be great improvements made there, both in fishing and agriculture; but the interest of the purchase-money exceeds the rent so very much, that I doubt if the bargain will be profitable. There is an island called Little Colonsay, of 10*l.* yearly rent, which I am informed has belonged to the Macquarrys of Ulva for many ages, but which was lately claimed by the Presbyterian Synod of Argyll, in consequence of a grant made to them by Queen Anne. It is believed that their claim will be dismissed, and that Little Colonsay will also be sold for the advantage of Macquarry's creditors. What think you of purchasing this island, and endowing a school or college there, the master to be a clergyman of the church of England? How venerable would such an institution make the name of DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON in the Hebrides! I have, like yourself, a wonderful pleasure in recollecting our travels in those islands. The pleasure is, I think, greater than it reasonably should be, considering that we had not much either of beauty or elegance to charm our imaginations, or of rude novelty to astonish. Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltic. (1) I am

(1) It appears that Johnson, now in his sixty-eighth year, was seriously inclined to realise the project of our going up the Baltic, which I had started when we were in the Isle of Sky; for he thus writes to Mrs. Thrale: —

"Ashbourne, 13th Sept. 1777. — Boswell, I believe, is coming. He talks of being here to-day: I shall be glad to see him: but he shrinks from the Baltic expedition, which, I think, is the best scheme in our power: what we shall substitute, I know not. He wants to see Wales; but, except the woods of *Bachycraigh*, what is there in Wales that can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity? We may, perhaps, form some scheme or other; but, in the phrase of *Hockley in the Hole*, it is pity he has not a *better bottom.*"

Such an ardour of mind, and vigour of enterprise, is admirable at any age; but more particularly so at the advanced period at which Johnson was then arrived. I am sorry now that I did not insist on our executing that scheme. Besides the other objects of curiosity and observation, to have seen my illustrious friend

sorry you have already been in Wales; for I wish to see it. Shall we go to Ireland, of which I have seen but little? We shall try to strike out a plan when we are at Ashbourne. I am ever your most faithful servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 296. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 11. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — I write to be left at Carlisle, as you direct me; but you cannot have it. Your letter, dated Sept. 6., was not at this place till this day, Thursday, Sept. 11.; and I hope you will be here before this is at Carlisle. (1) However, what you have not going, you may have returning; and as I believe I shall not love you less after our interview, it will then be as true as it is now, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and count your kindness as one of the chief felicities of my life. Do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write; nor has any man at all times something to say.

"That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge; and, if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal. Suspicion is very often an

received, as he probably would have been, by a prince so eminently distinguished for his variety of talents and acquisitions as the late King of Sweden, and by the Empress of Russia, whose extraordinary abilities, information, and magnanimity, astonish the world, would have afforded a noble subject for contemplation and record. This reflection may possibly be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold-blooded part of my readers; yet I own I frequently indulge it with an earnest, unavailing regret.

(1) It so happened. The letter was forwarded to my house at Edinburgh.

useless pain. From that, and all other pains, I wish you free and safe; for I am, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 297. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 13. 1777.

"DEAR MADAM —As I left you so much disordered, a fortnight is a long time to be without any account of your health. I am willing to flatter myself that you are better, though you gave me no reason to believe that you intended to use any means for your recovery. Nature often performs wonders, and will, I hope, do for you more than you seem inclined to do for yourself.

"In this weakness of body, with which it has pleased God to visit you, he has given you great cause of thankfulness, by the total exemption of your mind from all effects of your disorder. Your memory is not less comprehensive or distinct, nor your reason less vigorous and acute, nor your imagination less active and sprightly than in any former time of your life. This is a great blessing, as it respects enjoyment of the present; and a blessing yet far greater, as it bestows power and opportunity to prepare for the future.

"All sickness is a summons. But as you do not want exhortations, I will send you only my good wishes, and exhort you to believe the good wishes very sincere, of, dear Madam, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

On Sunday evening, Sept. 14., I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr. Taylor's door. Dr. Johnson and he appeared before I had got out of the post-chaise, and welcomed me cordially.

I told them that I had travelled all the preceding night, and gone to bed at Leek, in Staffordshire; and that when I rose to go to church in the after-

noon, I was informed there had been an earthquake, of which, it seems, the shock had been felt in some degree at Ashbourne. JOHNSON. "Sir, it will be much exaggerated in public talk: for, in the first place, the common people do not accurately adapt their thoughts to the objects; nor, secondly, do they accurately adapt their words to their thoughts: they do not mean to lie; but, taking no pains to be exact, they give you very false accounts. A great part of their language is proverbial. If any thing rocks at all, they say *it rocks like a cradle;* and in this way they go on."

The subject of grief for the loss of relations and friends being introduced, I observed that it was strange to consider how soon it in general wears away. Dr. Taylor mentioned a gentleman of the neighbourhood as the only instance he had ever known of a person who had endeavoured to *retain* grief. He told Dr. Taylor, that after his lady's death, which affected him deeply, he *resolved* that the grief, which he cherished with a kind of sacred fondness, should be lasting; but that he found he could not keep it long. JOHNSON. "All grief for what cannot in the course of nature be helped soon wears away; in some sooner, indeed, in some later; but it never continues very long, unless where there is madness, such as will make a man have pride so fixed in his mind as to imagine himself a king; or any other passion in an unreasonable way: for all unnecessary grief is unwise, and therefore will not be long retained by a sound mind. If, indeed, the cause of our grief is occasioned by our own miscon-

duct, if grief is mingled with remorse of conscience, it should be lasting." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend." JOHNSON. "Sir, we disapprove of him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better; but because we suppose, that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not had much affection for them."

I was somewhat disappointed in finding that the edition of the "English Poets," for which he was to write prefaces and lives, was not an undertaking directed by him, but that he was to furnish a preface and life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and *say* he was a dunce." My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.

On Monday, Sept. 15. (1), Dr. Johnson observed, that every body commended such parts of his "Journey to the Western Islands" as were in their own way. "For instance," said he, "Mr. Jackson (the all-knowing) told me there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of

(1) "Last night came Boswell. I am glad that he is come, and seems to be very brisk and lively, and laughs a little at ———." — *Lett.* vol. i. p. 369. — Probably his host Dr. Taylor — between whom and Boswell there seems to have been no great cordiality, and it may be suspected that Boswell does not take much pains to set Dr. Taylor's merits in the best light. He was Johnson's earliest and most constant friend, and read the funeral service over him; with, however, as the bystanders thought, too little feeling. — C.

language; Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries."

After breakfast, Johnson carried me to see the garden belonging to the school of Ashbourne, which is very prettily formed upon a bank, rising gradually behind the house. The Rev. Mr. Langley, the head-master, accompanied us.

While we sat basking in the sun upon a seat here, I introduced a common subject of complaint, the very small salaries which many curates have; and I maintained, that no man should be invested with the character of a clergyman, unless he has a security for such an income as will enable him to appear respectable; that, therefore, a clergyman should not be allowed to have a curate, unless he gives him a hundred pounds a year; if he cannot do that, let him perform the duty himself. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, it is wrong that any clergyman should be without a reasonable income; but as the church revenues were sadly diminished at the Reformation, the clergy who have livings cannot afford, in many instances, to give good salaries to curates, without leaving themselves too little; and, if no curate were to be permitted unless he had a hundred pounds a year, their number would be very small, which would be a disadvantage, as then there would not be such choice in the nursery for the church, curates being candidates for the higher ecclesiastical offices, according to their merit and good behaviour." He explained the system of the English hierarchy exceedingly well. "It is not thought fit," said he, "to trust a man with the care of a parish till he has

given proof as a curate that he shall deserve such a trust." This is an excellent theory; and if the practice were according to it, the church of England would be admirable indeed. However, as I have heard Dr. Johnson observe as to the universities, bad practice does not infer that the constitution is bad.

We had with us at dinner several of Dr. Taylor's neighbours, good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr. Johnson very well, and not to consider him in the light that a certain person [Mr. George Garrick] did, who being struck, or rather stunned by his voice and manner, when he was afterwards asked what he thought of him, answered, "He's a tremendous companion."

Johnson told me, that "Taylor was a very sensible acute man, and had a strong mind: that he had great activity in some respects, and yet such a sort of indolence, that if you should put a pebble upon his chimney-piece, you would find it there, in the same state, a year afterwards."

And here is a proper place to give an account of Johnson's humane and zealous interference in behalf of the Reverend Dr. William Dodd, formerly prebendary of Brecon, and chaplain in ordinary to his majesty; celebrated as a very popular preacher, an encourager of charitable institutions, and author of a variety of works, chiefly theological. Having unhappily contracted expensive habits of living, partly occasioned by licentiousness of manners, he in an evil hour, when pressed by want of money,

and dreading an exposure of his circumstances, forged a bond, of which he attempted to avail himself to support his credit, flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected. The person whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who he perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have generously paid the money in case of an alarm being taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country: but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.

Johnson told me that Dr. Dodd was very little acquainted with him, having been but once (1) in his company, many years previous to this period (which was precisely the state of my own acquaintance with Dodd); but in his distress he bethought himself of Johnson's persuasive power of writing, if haply it might avail to obtain for him the royal mercy. He did not apply to him directly, but, extraordinary as it may seem, through the late Countess of Harrington (2), who wrote a letter to Johnson, asking him to employ his pen in favour of

(1) [See Dr. Dodd's account of this meeting, *post*, April 13. 1778. n.]

(2) Caroline, eldest daughter of Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, and wife of William, the second Earl of Harrington. — M.

Dodd. Mr. Allen, the printer, who was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt-court, and for whom he had much kindness, was one of Dodd's friends, of whom, to the credit of humanity be it recorded, that he had many who did not desert him, even after his infringement of the law had reduced him to the state of a man under sentence of death. Mr. Allen told me that he carried Lady Harrington's letter to Johnson; that Johnson read it, walking up and down his chamber, and seemed much agitated, after which he said, "I will do what I can;" and certainly he did make extraordinary exertions.

He this evening, as he had obligingly promised in one of his letters, put into my hands the whole series of his writings upon this melancholy occasion, and I shall present my readers with the abstract which I made from the collection; in doing which I studied to avoid copying what had appeared in print, and now make part of the edition of "Johnson's Works" published by the booksellers of London, but taking care to mark Johnson's variations in some of the pieces there exhibited.

Dr. Johnson wrote, in the first place, Dr. Dodd's "Speech to the Recorder of London," at the Old Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren," a sermon delivered by Dr. Dodd in the chapel of Newgate. According to Johnson's manuscript, it began thus after the text, *What shall I do to be saved?* (1)

(1) What *must* I do to be saved? — *Acts*, c. 17. v. 30. — C.

"These were the words with which the keeper, to whose custody Paul and Silas were committed by their prosecutors, addressed his prisoners, when he saw them freed from their bonds by the perceptible agency of divine favour, and was, therefore, irresistibly convinced that they were not offenders against the laws, but martyrs to the truth."

Dr. Johnson was so good as to mark for me with his own hand, on a copy of this sermon which is now in my possession, such passages as were added by Dr. Dodd. They are not many: whoever will take the trouble to look at the printed copy, and attend to what I mention, will be satisfied of this.

There is a short introduction by Dr. Dodd, and he also inserted this sentence: "You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you; no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves." The *notes* are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words, "the thief whom he pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr. Dodd himself.

The other pieces mentioned by Johnson in the above mentioned collection are two letters; one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst (not Lord North, as is erroneously supposed), and one to Lord Mansfield. A petition from Dr. Dodd to the King. A petition from Mrs. Dodd to the Queen. Observations of some length inserted in the newspapers, on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd, signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He told

me that he had also written a petition for the city of London; "but (said he, with a significant smile) they *mended* it."(1)

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is "Dr. Dodd's last solemn Declaration," which he left with the sheriff at the place of execution. Here also my friend marked the variations on a copy of that piece now in my possession. Dodd inserted, "I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy;" and in the next sentence he introduced the words which I distinguished by italics: "my life for some *few unhappy* years past has been *dreadfully erroneous.*" Johnson's expression was *hypocritical*: but his remark on the margin is, "With this he said he could not charge himself."

(1) Having unexpectedly, by the favour of Mr. Stone, of London Field, Hackney, seen the original in Johnson's handwriting of "The Petition of the City of London to his Majesty, in favour of Dr. Dodd," I now present it to my readers, with such passages as were omitted enclosed in crotchets, and the additions or variations marked in italics: —

"That William Dodd, Doctor of Laws, now lying under sentence of death *in your majesty's gaol of Newgate* for the crime of forgery, has for a great part of his life set a useful and laudable example of diligence in his calling [and, as we have reason to believe, has exercised his ministry with great fidelity and efficacy], *which, in many instances, has produced the most happy effect.*

"That he has been the first institutor [or] *and* a very earnest and active promoter of several modes of useful charity, and [that], therefore [he], may be considered as having been on many occasions a benefactor to the public.

"[That when they consider his past life, they are willing to suppose his late crime to have been, not the consequence of habitual depravity, but the suggestion of some sudden and violent temptation.]

"[That] *your petitioners*, therefore, considering his case as, in some of its circumstances, unprecedented and peculiar, *and encouraged by your majesty's known clemency*, [they] most humbly recommend the said William Dodd to [his] *your* majesty's most gracious consideration, in hopes that he will be found not altogether [unfit] *unworthy* to stand an example of royal mercy." — B.

It does seem that these few alterations were *amendments.* — C.

Having thus authentically settled what part of the "Occasional Papers," concerning Dr. Dodd's miserable situation came from the pen of Johnson, I shall proceed to present my readers with my record of the unpublished writings relating to that extraordinary and interesting matter.

I found a letter to Dr. Johnson from Dr. Dodd, May 23., 1777, in which "The Convict's Address" seems clearly to be meant:—

LETTER 298. DR. DODD TO DR. JOHNSON.

"I am so penetrated, my ever dear Sir, with a sense of your extreme benevolence towards me, that I cannot find words equal to the sentiments of my heart.

"You are too conversant in the world to need the slightest hint from me of what infinite utility the speech (1) on the awful day has been to me. I experience, every hour, some good effect from it. I am sure that effects still more salutary and important must follow from *your kind and intended favour*. I will labour — God being my helper — to do justice to it from the pulpit. I am sure, had I your sentiments constantly to deliver from thence, in all their mighty force and power, not a soul could be left unconvinced and unpersuaded.

"May God Almighty bless and reward, with his choicest comforts, your philanthropic actions, and enable me at all times to express what I feel of the high and uncommon obligations which I owe to the *first man* in our times!"

On Sunday, June 22., he writes, begging Dr. John-

(1) His speech at the Old Bailey when found guilty.

son's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his majesty:

"'If his majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrors and ignominy of a *public death*, which the *public* itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled.'"

This letter was brought to Dr. Johnson when in church. He stooped down and read it (1), and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr. Dodd to the king:—

"SIR,—May it not offend your majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge; that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your laws and judges have condemned to the horror and ignominy of a public execution.

"I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example. Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity; but humbly hope, that public security may be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

"My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repent-

(1) He afterwards expressed a hope that this deviation from the duties of the place would be forgiven him.—C.

ance. Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative of mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal, before which kings and subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude, for the life and happiness of your majesty.—

"I am, Sir, your majesty's, &c."

LETTER 299. DR. JOHNSON TO DR. DODD.

"SIR,—I most seriously enjoin you not to let it be at all known that I have written this letter, and to return the copy to Mr. Allen in a cover to me. I hope I need not tell you that I wish it success. But do not indulge hope. Tell nobody."

It happened luckily that Mr. Allen was pitched on to assist in this melancholy office, for he was a great friend of Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate. Dr. Johnson never went to see Dr. Dodd. He said to me, "It would have done *him* more harm than good to Dodd, who once expressed a desire to see him, but not earnestly."

Dr. Johnson on the 20th of June, wrote the following letter:—

LETTER 300. TO THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JENKINSON.

"SIR,—Since the conviction and condemnation of Dr. Dodd, I have had, by the intervention of a friend, some intercourse with him, and I am sure I shall lose

nothing in your opinion by tenderness and commiseration. Whatever be the crime, it is not easy to have any knowledge of the delinquent, without a wish that his life may be spared; at least when no life has been taken away by him. I will, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting some reasons for which I wish this unhappy being to escape the utmost rigour of his sentence.

"He is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our church who has suffered public execution for immorality; and I know not whether it would not be more for the interests of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy.

"The supreme power has, in all ages, paid some attention to the voice of the people; and that voice does not least deserve to be heard when it calls out for mercy. There is now a very general desire that Dodd's life should be spared. More is not wished; and, perhaps, this is not too much to be granted.

"If you, Sir, have any opportunity of enforcing these reasons, you may, perhaps, think them worthy of consideration: but whatever you determine, I most respectfully entreat that you will be pleased to pardon for this intrusion, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

It has been confidently circulated, with invidious remarks, that to this letter no attention whatever was paid by Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), and that he did not even deign to show the common civility of owning the receipt of it. I could not but wonder at such conduct in the noble lord, whose own character and just elevation in life, I

thought, must have impressed him with all due regard for great abilities and attainments. As the story had been much talked of, and apparently from good authority, I could not but have animadverted upon it in this work, had it been as was alleged; but from my earnest love of truth, and having found reason to think that there might be a mistake, I presumed to write to his lordship, requesting an explanation; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I am enabled to assure the world that there is no foundation for it, the fact being, that owing to some neglect or accident, Johnson's letter never came to Lord Liverpool's hands. I should have thought it strange indeed, if that noble lord had undervalued my illustrious friend (1); but instead of this being the case, his lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased immediately to honour me, thus expresses himself: "I have always respected the memory of Dr. Johnson, and admire his writings; and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement."

All applications for the royal mercy having failed, Dr. Dodd prepared himself for death; and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr. Johnson as follows:—

(1) It would not be surprising if it had been so treated. Mr. Jenkinson was at this time Secretary at War, and was obnoxious to popular odium from an unfounded imputation of being the channel of a secret influence over the king. To request, therefore, *his* influence with the king on a matter so wholly foreign to his duties and station, was a kind of verification of the slander, at which Lord Liverpool might have felt offended. — C.

LETTER 301. FROM DR. DODD.

"June 25. midnight.

"Accept, thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf. — Oh! Dr. Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to Heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man! — I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports — the infelt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions! — And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transports, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my comforter, my advocate, and my *friend!* God *be ever* with *you!*"

Dr. Johnson lastly wrote to Dr. Dodd this solemn and soothing letter: —

LETTER 302. TO THE REV. DR. DODD.

"June 26. 1777.

"DEAR SIR, — That which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles; it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty, and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his son Jesus Christ, our Lord!

"In requital of those well-intended offices which you

are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

Under the copy of this letter I found written, in Johnson's own hand, "Next day, June 27., he was executed." (1)

To conclude this interesting episode with an useful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the "Occasional Papers," concerning the unfortunate Dr. Dodd. (2)

"Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his public ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of

(1) That Dr. Johnson should have desired one prayer from Dr. Dodd, who was himself such an atrocious offender, has been very much condemned; but we ought to consider, that Dr. Johnson might, perhaps, have had sufficient reason to believe Dodd to be a sincere penitent, which, indeed, was the case; and, besides, his mind was so softened with pity and compassion for him, so impressed with the awful idea of his situation, the last evening of his life, that he probably did not think of his former transgressions, or thought, perhaps, that he ought not to remember them, when the offender was so soon to appear before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Dr. Johnson told me that Dodd, on reading this letter, gave it into the hands of his wife, with a strong injunction never to part with it; that he had slept during the night, and when he awoke in the morning, he did not immediately recollect that he was to suffer, and when he did, he expressed the utmost horror and agony of mind — outrageously vehement in his speech and in his looks — till he went into the chapel, and on his coming out of it his face expressed the most angelic peace and composure. — REYNOLDS'S *Recoll.*

(2) See Dr. Johnson's final opinion concerning Dr. Dodd, *sub* April 18. 1783. — M.

his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

"Let those who are tempted to his faults tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments endeavour to confirm them, by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude." (1)

(1) Johnson was deeply concerned at the failure of the petitions in behalf of Dr. Dodd; and asked me at the time, if the request contained in them was not such an one as ought to have been granted to the prayer of twenty-three thousand subjects: to which I answered, that the subscription of popular petitions was a thing of course, and that, therefore, the difference between twenty and twenty thousand names was inconsiderable. He further censured the clergy very severely, for not interposing in his behalf, and said, "that their inactivity arose from a paltry fear of being reproached with partiality towards one of their own order." But although be assisted in the solicitations for pardon, yet, in his private judgment, he thought Dodd unworthy of it; having been known to say, that had he been the adviser of the king, he should have told him, that, in pardoning Dodd, his justice, in consigning the Perreaus to their sentence would have been called in question. — HAWKINS.

Dr. Dodd was born May 29. 1729, and died June 27. 1777, in the forty-ninth year of his age. He married a Miss Perkins from Durham. Left in sorrow, poverty, and disgrace, reason forsook her, and she died a wretched maniac at Ilford, in Essex, July 14. 1784. — NOBLE.]

CHAPTER IX.

1777.

Mr. Fitzherbert. — Hamilton of Bangour. — Bleeding. — Hume. — Fear of Death. — Duties of a Biographer. — Stuart Family. — Birth-days. — Warton's Poems. — Keddlestone. — Derby. — Shaving. — Nichols's "De Animâ Medicâ." — Dr. Dodd. — Blair. — Goldsmith. — Monboddo's "Air-bath." — Early-rising. — Sleep. — Water-drinking. — Rutty's "Spiritual Diary." — Autobiographers. — Imitators of Johnson's Style. — Biographia Britannica. — Melancholy and Madness. — London Life. — Profession of the Law. — Employment. — Dr. Taylor's "Sermons." — Actors.

JOHNSON gave us this evening, in his happy discriminative manner, a portrait of the late Mr. Fitzherbert (1) of Derbyshire. "There was," said he, "no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Every body liked him; but he had no *friends*, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts. People were willing to think well of every thing about him. A gentleman was making an affecting rant, as many people do, of

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 85., and Vol. IV. p. 271. — C.

'great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London; how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him. 'Can't you,' said Fitzherbert, 'take a postchaise and go to him?' This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it.(1) However, this was circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too; a proof that he was no very witty man. He was an instance of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive; by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight. In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him."

Tuesday, September 16., Dr. Johnson having mentioned to me the extraordinary size and price of some cattle reared by Dr. Taylor, I rode out with our host, surveyed his farm, and was shown one cow which he had sold for a hundred and twenty guineas, and another for which he had been offered a hundred and thirty. Taylor thus described to me

(1) Dr. Gisborne, physician to his Majesty's household, has obligingly communicated to me a fuller account of this story than had reached Dr. Johnson. The affected gentleman was the late John Gilbert Cooper, Esq., author of a Life of Socrates, and of some poems in Dodsley's collection. Mr. Fitzherbert found him one morning, apparently, in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his son, as to seem beyond the power of comfort. At length, however, he exclaimed, "I'll write an elegy." Mr. Fitzherbert, being satisfied by this of the sincerity of his emotions, slily said, "Had not you better take a postchaise, and go and see him?" It was the shrewdness of the insinuation which made the story be circulated.

his old schoolfellow and friend, Johnson: "He is a man of a very clear head, great power of words, and a very gay imagination; but there is no disputing with him. He will not hear you, and, having a louder voice than you, must roar you down."

In the afternoon I tried to get Dr. Johnson to like the Poems of Mr. Hamilton of Bangour [1], which I had brought with me: I had been much pleased with them at a very early age: the impression still remained on my mind; it was confirmed by the opinion of my friend the Hon. Andrew Erskine, himself both a good poet and a good critic, who thought Hamilton as true a poet as ever wrote, and that his not having fame was unaccountable. Johnson, upon repeated occasions, while I was at Ashbourne, talked slightingly of Hamilton. He said there was no power of thinking in his verses, nothing that strikes one, nothing better than what you generally find in magazines; and that the highest praise they deserved was, that they were very well for a gentleman to hand about among his friends. He said the imitation of *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor*, &c. was too solemn: he read part of it at the beginning. He read the beautiful pathetic song, "Ah, the poor shepherd's mournful fate," and did not seem to give attention to what I had been used to think tender elegant strains, but laughed at the rhyme, in Scotch pronunciation, *wishes* and *blushes*, reading *wushes* — and there he stopped. He owned that the epitaph on Lord Newhall was pretty well

(1) See *antè*, Vol. IV. p. 25. — C.

done. He read the "Inscription in a Summer-house," and a little of the Imitations of Horace's Epistles; but said he found nothing to make him desire to read on. When I urged that there were some good poetical passages in the book, "Where," said he, "will you find so large a collection without some?" I thought the description of Winter might obtain his approbation:

> "See Winter, from the frozen north,
> Drives his iron chariot forth!
> His grisly hand in icy chains
> Fair Tweeda's silver flood constrains," &c.

He asked why an "*iron* chariot?" and said "icy chains" was an old image. I was struck with the uncertainty of taste, and somewhat sorry that a poet whom I had long read with fondness was not approved by Dr. Johnson. I comforted myself with thinking that the beauties were too delicate for his robust perceptions. Garrick maintained that he had not a taste for the finest productions of genius: but I was sensible, that when he took the trouble to analyse critically, he generally convinced us that he was right.

In the evening the Rev. Mr. Seward, of Lichfield, who was passing through Ashbourne in his way home, drank tea with us. Johnson described him thus: "Sir, his ambition is to be a fine talker; so he goes to Buxton and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him. And, Sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves. I do not know a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may

do any thing that is for his ease [see p. 115.] and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms: Sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty."

Dr. Taylor's nose happening to bleed, he said it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval. Dr. Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physic, disapproved much of periodical bleeding. "For," said he, "you accustom yourself to an evacuation which nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you from forgetfulness or any other cause omit it; so you may be suddenly suffocated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacuations, because, should you omit them, nature can supply the omission; but nature cannot open a vein to blood you." (1) "I do not like to take an emetic," said Taylor, "for fear of breaking some small vessels." "Poh!" said Johnson, "if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels" (blowing with high derision).

I mentioned to Dr. Johnson, that David Hume's persisting in his infidelity when he was dying shocked me much. JOHNSON. "Why should it shock you, Sir? Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected

(1) Nature, however, may supply the evacuation by an hemorrhage. — KEARNEY.

that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right." I said I had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. JOHNSON. "It was not so, Sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease, than that so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go) into an unknown state, and not being uneasy at leaving all he knew. And you are to consider, that upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive to speak the truth." The horror of death, which I had always observed in Dr. Johnson, appeared strong to-night. I ventured to tell him, that I had been, for moments in my life, not afraid of death; therefore I could suppose another man in that state of mind for a considerable space of time. He said, "he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him." He added, that it had been observed, that scarce any man dies in public but with apparent resolution; from that desire of praise which never quits us. I said, Dr. Dodd seemed to be willing to die, and full of hopes of happiness. "Sir," said he, "Dr. Dodd would have given both his hands and both his legs to have lived. The better a man is, the more afraid is he of death, having a clearer view of infinite purity." He owned, that our being in an unhappy uncertainty as to our salvation was mysterious; and said, "Ah! we must wait till we are in another state of being to have many things

explained to us." Even the powerful mind of Johnson seemed foiled by futurity. But I thought, that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation, being mingled with hope, was yet more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity. A man can live in thick air, but perishes in an exhausted receiver.

Dr. Johnson was much pleased with a remark which I told him was made to me by General Paoli: "That it is impossible not to be afraid of death; and that those who at the time of dying are not afraid, are not thinking of death, but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight: so that all men are equally afraid of death when they see it; only some have a power of turning their sight away from it better than others."

On Wednesday, September 17., Dr. Butter, physician at Derby, drank tea with us; and it was settled that Dr. Johnson and I should go on Friday and dine with him. Johnson said, "I am glad of this." He seemed weary of the uniformity of life at Dr. Taylor's.

Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life, a man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities: the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned; for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnell drank too freely; for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this; so that more ill may be done by the example, than good by telling the whole truth." Here was

an instance of his varying from himself in talk; for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr. Johnson maintained, that "if a man is to write a *Panegyric*, he may keep vices out of sight; but if he professes to write a *Life*, he must represent it really as it was:" and when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnell drank to excess, he said, that, "it would produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen that even the learning and genius of Parnell could be debased by it." And in the Hebrides he maintained, as appears from the "Journal," that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults if he writes his life. (1)

He had this evening, partly, I suppose, from the spirit of contradiction to his Whig friend, a violent argument with Dr. Taylor, as to the inclinations of the people of England at this time towards the Royal Family of Stuart. He grew so outrageous as to say, "that if England were fairly polled, the present king would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow." Taylor, who was as violent a Whig as Johnson was a Tory, was roused by this to a pitch of bellowing. He denied loudly what Johnson said; and maintained that there was an abhorrence against the Stuart family, though he admitted that the people were not much attached to the present king. (2) JOHNSON. "Sir, the state of the country

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. *J.* p. 259.

(2) Dr. Taylor was very ready to make this admission, because the party with which he was connected was not in power.

is *this*: the people, knowing it to be agreed on all hands that this king has not the hereditary right to the crown, and there being no hope that he who has it can be restored, have grown cold and indifferent upon the subject of loyalty, and have no warm attachment to any king. They would not, therefore, risk any thing to restore the exiled family. They would not give twenty shillings apiece to bring it about. But if a mere vote could do it, there would be twenty to one; at least there would be a very great majority of voices for it. For, Sir, you are to consider, that all those who think a king has a right to his crown as a man has to his estate, which is the just opinion, would be for restoring the king, who certainly has the hereditary right, could he be trusted with it; in which there would be no danger now, when laws and every thing else are so much advanced: and every king will govern by the laws. And you must also consider, Sir, that there is nothing on the other side to oppose to this; for it is not alleged by any one that the present family has any inherent right: so that the Whigs could not have a contest between two rights."

Dr. Taylor admitted, that if the question as to hereditary right were to be tried by a poll of the people of England, to be sure the abstract doctrine would be given in favour of the family of Stuart; but he said, the conduct of that family, which occasioned

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There was then some truth in it, owing to the pertinacity of factious clamour. Had he lived till now, it would have been impossible for him to deny that His Majesty possesses the warmest affection of his people.

their expulsion, was so fresh in the minds of the people, that they would not vote for a restoration. Dr. Johnson, I think, was contented with the admission as to the hereditary right, leaving the original point in dispute, viz. what the people upon the whole would do, taking in right and affection; for he said, people were afraid of a change, even though they think it right. Dr. Taylor said something of the slight foundation of the hereditary right of the house of Stuart. "Sir," said Johnson, "the house of Stuart succeeded to the full right of both the houses of York and Lancaster, whose common source had the undisputed right. A right to a throne is like a right to any thing else. Possession is sufficient, where no better right can be shown. This was the case with the Royal Family of England, as it is now with the King of France: for as to the first beginning of the right we are in the dark."

Thursday, Sept. 18.—Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well," said I, "for it is Dr. Johnson's birthday." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birthday. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly), "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next day."

Some ladies, who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birthday, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally, by wishing him

joy. I know not why he disliked having his birthday mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread. (1)

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir," said Johnson, "this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English poets who had published a volume of poems. Johnson told me, "that a Mr. Coxeter (2), whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this; having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known; but that upon his death Tom Osborne bought them, and they were dispersed which he thought a pity, as it was

(1) His letter of this date to Mrs. Thrale confirms this conjecture. — "Ashbourne, Sept. 18. 1777.—Here is another birthday. They come very fast. I am now sixty-eight. To lament the past is vain; what remains is to look for hope in futurity. — Boswell is with us in good humour, and plays his part with his usual vivacity. We are to go in the doctor's vehicle and dine at Derby to-morrow. — Do you know any thing of Bolt Court? Invite Mr. Levet to dinner, and make inquiry what family he has, and how they proceed. I had a letter lately from Mrs. Williams; Dr. Lewis visits her, and has added ipecacuanha to her bark · but I do not hear much of her amendment. Age is a very stubborn disease. Yet Levet sleeps sound every night. I am sorry for poor Seward's pain, but he may live to be better. Mr. [Middleton's] erection of an urn [see *ante*, Vol. V. p. 212.] looks like an intention to bury me alive: I would as willingly see my friend, however benevolent and hospitable, quietly inurned. Let him think for the present of some more acceptable memorial."

(2) See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 299. — C.

curious to see any series complete; and in every volume of poems something good may be found."

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late. "He puts," said he, "a very common thing in a strange dress, till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it." BOSWELL. "That is owing to his being so much versant in old English poetry." JOHNSON. "What is that to the purpose, Sir? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, Sir, —— (1) has taken to an odd mode. For example, he'd write thus:

> 'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
> Wearing out life's evening gray.'

Gray evening is common enough; but *evening gray* he'd think fine.—Stay;—we'll make out the stanza:

> 'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
> Wearing out life's evening gray:
> Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
> What is bliss? and which the way?'"

BOSWELL. "But why smite his bosom, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why to show he was in earnest" (smiling). He at an after period added the following stanza:—

(1) This has been generally supposed to have been Dr. Percy, but Thomas Warton is meant, and the parodies were intended to ridicule the style of his poems published in 1777. The first lines of two of his best known odes are marked with that kind of *inversion* which Johnson laughed at — "Evening spreads his *mantle hoar*," and "Beneath the beech whose *branches bare*." But there is no other point of resemblance that I can discover. — C.

"Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
— Scarce repress'd the starting tear; —
When the smiling sage replied —
— Come, my lad, and drink some beer." (1)

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the first three lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque surprise on gloomy sentimental inquiries. And, perhaps, the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being: —"Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking: take a cup and be merry."

Friday, September 19., after breakfast, Dr. Johnson and I set out in Dr. Taylor's chaise to go to Derby. The day was fine, and we resolved to go by Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, that I might see his lordship's fine house. I was struck with the magnificence of the building; and the extensive park, with the finest verdure, covered with deer, and cattle, and sheep, delighted me. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, filled me with a sort of respectful

(1) As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the progress of this little composition, I shall insert it from my notes. "When Dr. Johnson and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre tavern, May 9. 1778, he said, '*Where* is bliss,' would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza, but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It was somewhat as follows; the last line I am sure I remember: —

'While I thus cried,
seer,
The hoary replied,
Come, my lad, and drink some beer.'

In spring, 1779, when in better humour, he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion, which was changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line, and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it."

admiration; for one of them sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads; the large piece of water formed by his lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it; the venerable Gothic church, now the family chapel, just by the house; in short, the grand group of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. "One should think," said I, "that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy." "Nay, Sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil — poverty." (1)

Our names were sent up, and a well-drest elderly housekeeper, a most distinct articulator, showed us the house; which I need not describe, as there is an account of it published in "Adams's Works in Architecture." Dr. Johnson thought better of it to-day, than when he saw it before (1); for he had lately attacked it violently, saying, "It would do excellently for a town-hall. The large room with the pillars," said he, "would do for the judges to sit in at the assizes; the circular room for a jury-chamber; and the room above for prisoners." Still he thought the large room ill lighted, and of no use but for dancing in; and the bedchambers but indifferent rooms;

(1) When I mentioned Dr. Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, "It is true all this excludes only one evil; but how much good does it let in!" — *First edition.* To this observation much praise has been justly given. Let me then now do myself the honour to mention, that the lady who made it was the late Margaret Montgomerie, my very valuable wife, and the very affectionate mother of my children, who, if they inherit her good qualities, will have no reason to complain of their lot. *Dos magna parentum virtus.* — *Second edition.*

(1) See *ante*, Tour in Wales, Vol. V. p. 196. — C.

and that the immense sum which it cost was injudiciously laid out. Dr. Taylor had put him in mind of his *appearing* pleased with the house. "But," said he, "that was when Lord Scarsdale was present. Politeness obliges us to appear pleased with a man's works when he is present. No man will be so ill-bred as to question you. You may therefore pay compliments without saying what is not true. I should say to Lord Scarsdale of his large room, 'My lord, this is the most *costly* room that I ever saw;' which is true."

Dr. Manningham, physician in London, who was visiting at Lord Scarsdale's, accompanied us through many of the rooms; and soon afterwards my lord himself, to whom Dr. Johnson was known, appeared, and did the honours of the house. We talked of Mr. Langton. Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed, "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton." We saw a good many fine pictures, which I think are described in one of "Young's Tours." There is a printed catalogue of them, which the housekeeper put into my hand. I should like to view them at leisure. I was much struck with Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, by Rembrandt. We were shown a pretty large library. In his lordship's dressing-room lay Johnson's small dictionary: he showed it to me, with some eagerness, saying, "Look ye! *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris.*" He observed, also, Goldsmith's "Animated Nature;" and said, 'Here's our friend! The poor doctor would have been happy to hear of this."

In our way, Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a postchaise.(1) "If," said he, "I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a postchaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation." I observed, that we were this day to stop just where the Highland army did in 1745. JOHNSON. "It was a noble attempt." BOSWELL. "I wish we could have an authentic history of it." JOHNSON. "If you were not an idle dog you might write it, by collecting from every body what they can tell, and putting down your authorities." BOSWELL. "But I could not have the advantage of it in my lifetime." JOHNSON. "You might have the satisfaction of its fame, by printing it in Holland; and as to profit, consider how long it was before writing came to be considered in a pecuniary view. Baretti says, he is the first man that ever received copy-money in Italy. I said that I would endeavour to do what Dr. Johnson suggested; and I thought that I might write so as to venture to publish my "History of the Civil War in Great Britain in 1745 and 1746" without being obliged to go to a foreign press. (2) * * *

When we arrived at Derby, Dr. Butter accompanied us to see the manufactory of china there. I

(1) See *antè*, pp. 88. and 120.—C.

(2) I am now happy to understand that Mr. John Home, who was himself gallantly in the field for the reigning family in that interesting warfare, but is generous enough to do justice to the other side, is preparing an account of it for the press.—B. [It appeared, in one vol. 4to, in 1802.]

admired the ingenuity and delicate art with which a man fashioned clay into a cup, a saucer, or a teapot, while a boy turned round a wheel to give the mass rotundity. I thought this as excellent in its species of power, as making good verses in its species. Yet I had no respect for this potter. Neither, indeed, has a man of any extent of thinking for a mere verse-maker, in whose numbers, however perfect, there is no poetry, no mind. The china was beautiful, but Dr. Johnson justly observed it was too dear; for that he could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what were here made of porcelain. (1)

I felt a pleasure in walking about Derby, such as I always have in walking about any town to which I am not accustomed. There is an immediate sensation of novelty; and one speculates on the way in which life is passed in it, which, although there is a sameness every where upon the whole, is yet minutely diversified. The minute diversities in every thing are wonderful. Talking of shaving the other night at Dr. Taylor's, Dr. Johnson said, "Sir, of a thousand shavers, two do not shave so much alike as not to be distinguished." I thought this not possible, till he specified so many of the varieties in shaving; — holding the razor more or less perpendicular; drawing long or short strokes; beginning at the upper part of the face, or the under — at the right side or the left side. Indeed, when one considers what variety of sounds can be uttered by

(1) I was once present when a flower-pot of *Sèvres* china, of about the size that would hold a pint of water, was sold by auction for seventy pounds. — C.

the windpipe, in the compass of a very small aperture, we may be convinced how many degrees of difference there may be in the application of a razor.

We dined with Dr. Butter (1), whose lady is daughter of my cousin Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensberry. Johnson and he had a good deal of medical conversation. Johnson said he had somewhere or other given an account of Dr. Nichols's discourse "*De Animâ Medicâ.*" He told us, "that whatever a man's distemper was, Dr. Nichols would not attend (2) him as a physician, if his mind was not at ease; for he believed that no medicines would have any influence. He once attended a man in trade, upon whom he found none of the medicines he prescribed had any effect he asked the man's wife privately whether his affairs were not in a bad way? She said no. He continued his attendance some time, still without success. At length the man's wife told him she had discovered that her husband's affairs *were* in a bad way. When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, 'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you

(1) Dr. Butter was at this time a practising physician at Derby. He afterwards removed to London, where he died, March 22. 1805. He is author of several medical tracts. — M.

(2) Dr. Nichols's opinion had made a strong impression on Johnson's mind, and appears to have been the cause of his urging Mrs. Aston and his other correspondents to keep their minds as much as possible at ease. — HALL.

have: is your mind at ease? Goldsmith answered it was not."

After dinner, Mrs. Butter went with me to see the silk-mill which Mr. John Lombe had ([1]) had a patent for, having brought away the contrivance from Italy. I am not very conversant with mechanics; but the simplicity of this machine, and its multiplied operations, struck me with an agreeable surprise. I had learnt from Dr. Johnson, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short; but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind; for happiness should be cultivated as much as we can, and the objects which are instrumental to it should be steadily considered as of importance with a reference not only to ourselves, but to multitudes in successive ages. Though it is proper to value small parts, as

"Sands make the mountain, moments make the year;"—YOUNG.

yet we must contemplate, collectively, to have a just estimation of objects. One moment's being uneasy or not, seems of no consequence; yet this may be thought of the next, and the next, and so on, till there is a large portion of misery. In the same way one must think of happiness, of learning, of friendship. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel

(1) See Hutton's "History of Derby," a book which is deservedly esteemed for its information, accuracy, and good narrative. Indeed, the age in which we live is eminently distinguished by topographical excellence.

drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes its run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over. We must not divide the objects of our attention into minute parts, and think separately of each part. It is by contemplating a large mass of human existence, that a man, while he sets a just value on his own life, does not think of his death as annihilating all that is great and pleasing in the world, as if actually *contained in his mind*, according to Berkeley's reverie. (1) If his imagination be not sickly and feeble, it "wings its distant way" far beyond himself, and views the world in unceasing activity of every sort. It must be acknowledged, however, that Pope's plaintive reflection, that all things would be as gay as ever, on the day of his death, is natural and common. We are apt to transfer to all around us our own gloom, without considering that at any given point of time there is, perhaps, as much youth and gaiety in the world as at another. Before I came into this life, in which I have had so many pleasant scenes, have not thousands and ten thousands of deaths and funerals happened, and have not families been in grief for their nearest relations? But have those dismal circumstances at all affected *me*? Why, then, should the gloomy scenes which I experience, or which I know, affect others? Let us guard against imagining that there is an end of felicity upon earth, when we ourselves grow old, or are unhappy.

(2) This is by no means an accurate allusion to Berkeley's theory. — C.

Dr. Johnson told us at tea, that when some of Dr. Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave a "wretched world," he had honesty enough not to join in the cant: — "No, no," said he, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson added, "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth; for, to be sure, he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

He told us that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler, if he would let him escape. He added, that he knew a friend of Dodd's, who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys who could get him out, but it was too late; for he was watched with much circumspection. He said, Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place; and he believed it was carried into the prison.(1)

Johnson disapproved of Dr. Dodd's leaving the world persuaded that "The Convict's Address to

(1) Dr. Johnson told me that Dodd probably entertained some hopes of life even to the last moment, having been flattered by some of his medical friends that there was a chance of suspending its total extinction till he was cut down, by placing the knot of the rope in a particular manner behind his ear. That then he was to be carried to a convenient place, where they would use their utmost endeavour to recover him. All this was done. The hangman observed their injunctions in fixing the rope, and as the cart drew off, said in Dodd's ear, you must not move an inch! But he struggled. Being carried to the place appointed, his friends endeavoured to restore him by bathing his breast with warm water, which Dr. Johnson said was not so likely to have that effect as cold water. — Reynolds, *Recoll.*

his unhappy Brethren" was of his own writing. "But, Sir," said I, "you contributed to the deception; for when Mr. Seward expressed a doubt to you that it was not Dodd's own, because it had a great deal more force of mind in it than any thing known to be his, you answered,—'Why should you think so? Depend upon it, Sir, when any man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.'" JOHNSON. "Sir, as Dodd got it from me to pass as his own, while that could do him any good, that was an *implied promise* that I should not own it. To own it, therefore, would have been telling a lie, with the addition of breach of promise, which was worse than simply telling a lie to make it be believed it was Dodd's. Besides, Sir, I did not *directly* tell a lie: I left the matter uncertain. Perhaps I thought that Seward would not believe it the less to be mine for what I said; but I would not put it in his power to say I had owned it."

He praised Blair's Sermons: "Yet," said he, (willing to let us see he was aware that fashionable fame, however deserved, is not always the most lasting,) "perhaps they may not be reprinted after seven years; at least not after Blair's death."

He said, "Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young; though when he had got high in fame, one of his friends (1) began to recollect something of his being distinguished at col-

(1) Mr. Burke. — C.

lege.[1] "Goldsmith in the same manner recollected more of that friend's early years, as he grew a greater man."

I mentioned that Lord Monboddo told me, he awaked every morning at four, and then for his health got up and walked in his room naked, with the window open, which he called taking *an air bath*; after which he went to bed again, and slept two hours more. Johnson, who was always ready to beat down any thing that seemed to be exhibited with disproportionate importance, thus observed: "I suppose, Sir, there is no more in it than this; he wakes at four, and cannot sleep till he chills himself, and makes the warmth of the bed a grateful sensation."

I talked of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr. Johnson told me, "that the learned Mrs. Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished, and she therefore had a contrivance, that, at a certain hour, her chamber-light should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise: this roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up." But I said *that* was my difficulty; and wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of Nature which could do this. I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually; but that

(1) He was distinguished in college, as appears from a circumstance mentioned by Dr. Kearney. See Vol. II. p.189. — M.

would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertiæ*, and give elasticity to the muscles. As I imagine that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been; and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable, but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable; I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it; we can give it tension or relaxation; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

Johnson observed, that "a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr. Mead says is between seven and nine hours." I told him, that Dr. Cullen said to me, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once. JOHNSON. "This rule, Sir, cannot hold in all cases; for many people have their sleep broken by sickness; and surely, Cullen would not have a man to get up, after having slept but an hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep*." (1) Dr. Taylor remarked,

(1) This regimen was, however, practised by Bishop Ken, of whom Hawkins (*not Sir John*), in his life of that venerable prelate, p. 4., tells us, "And that neither his study might be the aggressor on his hours of instruction, or what he judged his duty, prevent his improvements; or both, his closet addresses to his God; he strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two of the clock in the morning, and sometimes sooner; and grew so habitual, that it continued with him almost till his last illness. And so lively and cheerful was his temper, that he would be very facetious and entertaining to his friends in the evening, even when it was perceived that with difficulty he kept his eyes open; and then

I think very justly, that "a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary times, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well; for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree."

Johnson advised me to-night not to *refine* in the education of my children. "Life," said he, "will not bear refinement: you must do as other people do."

As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr. Johnson recommended to me, as he had often done, to drink water only: "For," said he, "you are then sure not to get drunk; whereas, if you drink wine, you are never sure." I said, drinking wine was a pleasure which I was unwilling to give up. "Why, Sir," said he, "there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life: but it may be necessary." He however owned, that in his opinion a free use of wine did not shorten life; and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch Lord (1) (whom he named), celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man. "But stay," said he, with his usual intelligence and accuracy of inquiry — "does it take much wine to

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seemed to go to rest with no other purpose than the refreshing and enabling him with more vigour and cheerfulness to sing his morning hymn, as he then used to do to his lute before he put on his clothes."

(1) Probably Thomas, sixth Earl of Kellie, born in 1732; died in 1781. He was remarkable for some musical talents, but still more for his conviviality. Even the *Peerage* confesses that "he was more assiduous in the service of Bacchus than Apollo." — C. After this note was written, Sir James Mackintosh told me that he believed that Lord Errol was meant: but see *post*, April 28. 1777. — C. 1835.

make him drunk?" I answered, "a great deal either of wine or strong punch."—"Then," said he, "that is the worse." I presume to illustrate my friend's observation thus: "A fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered than when a long and obstinate resistance is made."

I ventured to mention a person who was as violent a Scotchman as he was an Englishman; and literally had the same contempt for an Englishman compared with a Scotchman, that he had for a Scotchman compared with an Englishman; and that he would say of Dr. Johnson, "Damned rascal! to talk as he does of the Scotch." This seemed, for a moment, "to give him pause." It, perhaps, presented his extreme prejudice against the Scotch in a point of view somewhat new to him by the effect of *contrast*.

By the time when we returned to Ashbourne, Dr. Taylor was gone to bed. Johnson and I sat up a ong time by ourselves.

He was much diverted with an article which I showed him in the "Critical Review" of this year, giving an account of a curious publication, entitled "A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies, by John Rutty, M. D." Dr. Rutty was one of the people called quakers, a physician of some eminence in Dublin, and author of several works. This Diary, which was kept from 1753 to 1775, the year in which he died, and was now published in two volumes octavo, exhibited, in the simplicity of his heart, a minute and honest register of the state of his mind; which, though frequently laughable enough, was not more so than the history of many men would be, if re-

corded with equal fairness. The following specimens were extracted by the reviewers: —

"Tenth month, 1753, 23.—Indulgence in bed an hour too long.

"Twelfth month, 17.—An hypochondriac obnubilation from wind and indigestion.

"Ninth month, 28.—An over-dose of whisky.

"29.—A dull, cross, choleric day.

"First month, 1757, 22.—A little swinish at dinner and repast. Dogged on provocation.

"Second month, 5.—Very dogged or snappish.

"14.—Snappish on fasting.

"26.—Cursed snappishness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition.

"Third month, 11.—On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding.

"22.—Scolded too vehemently.

"23.—Dogged again.

"Fourth month, 29.—Mechanically and sinfully dogged."

Johnson laughed heartily at this good Quietist's self-condemning minutes; particularly at his mentioning, with such a serious regret, occasional instances of "*swinishness* in eating, and *doggedness of temper*." He thought the observations of the Critical Reviewers upon the importance of a man to himself so ingenious and so well expressed, that I shall here introduce them. After observing, that "there are few writers who have gained any reputation by recording their own actions," they say, —

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the *first* we have Julius Cæsar: he relates his own trans-

actions; but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus: this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times: the celebrated *Huetius* (1) has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, '*De Rebus ad eum pertinentibus.*' In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual: Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatic writers of memoirs and meditations."

I mentioned to him that Dr. Hugh Blair, in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh, had animadverted on the Johnsonian style as too pompous; and attempted to imitate it, by giving a sentence of Addison in "The Spectator," No. 411., in the manner of Johnson. When treating of the utility of the pleasures of imagination in preserving us from vice, it is observed of those "who know not how to be idle and innocent," that "their very first step out of business is into vice or folly;" which Dr. Blair supposed would have been expressed in "The Rambler" thus: "their very first step out of the regions of business is into the perturbation of vice,

(1) Huet, Bishop of Avranches. See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 94. — C.

or the vacuity of folly." (1) JOHNSON. "Sir, these are not the words I should have used. No, Sir; the imitators of my style have not hit it. Miss Aikin has done it the best; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction." (2)

I intend, before this work is concluded, to exhibit specimens of imitation of my friend's style in various modes; some caricaturing or mimicking it, and some formed upon it, whether intentionally, or with a degree of similarity to it, of which, perhaps, the writers were not conscious.

In Baretti's Review, which he published in Italy, under the title of "FRUSTA LETTERARIA," it is observed, that Dr. Robertson the historian had formed his style upon that of "*Il celebre Samuele Johnson.*" My friend himself was of that opinion; for he once said to me, in a pleasant humour, "Sir, if Robertson's style be faulty, he owes it to me; that is, having too many words, and those too big ones."

I read to him a letter which Lord Monboddo had written to me, containing some critical remarks upon the style of his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland." His lordship praised the very fine pass-

(1) When Dr. Blair published his "Lectures," he was invidiously attacked for having omitted his censure on Johnson's style, and, on the contrary, praising it highly. But before that time, Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" had appeared, in which his style was considerably easier than when he wrote "The Rambler." It would, therefore, have been uncandid in Blair, even supposing his criticism to have been just, to have preserved it.

(2) Probably in an essay "Against Inconsistency in our Expectations," by Miss Aikin, afterwards Mrs. Barbauld, in a volume of miscellaneous pieces published by her and her brother, Dr. Aikin, in 1773. — C.

age upon landing at Icolmkil (1): but his own style being exceedingly dry and hard, he disapproved of the richness of Johnson's language, and of his frequent use of metaphorical expressions. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, this criticism would be just, if, in my style, superfluous words, or words too big for the thoughts, could be pointed out; but this I do not believe can be done. For instance, in the passage which Lord Monboddo admires, 'We were now treading that illustrious region,' the word *illustrious* contributes nothing to the mere narration; for the fact might be told without it: but it is not, therefore, superfluous; for it wakes the mind to peculiar attention, where something of more than usual importance is to be presented. 'Illustrious!' — for what? and then the sentence proceeds to expand the circumstances connected with Iona. And, Sir, as to metaphorical expression, that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one; — conveys the meaning more luminously, and generally with a perception of delight."

He told me, that he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the "Biographia Britannica," but had declined it; which he afterwards said to me he regretted. In this regret many will join, because it would have procured us more of Johnson's most delightful species of writing; and although my friend Dr. Kippis (2) has hitherto discharged the task

(1) See *antè*, Vol. V. p. 73. — C.

(2) After having given to the public the first five volumes

judiciously, distinctly, and with more impartiality than might have been expected from a separatist, it were to have been wished that the superintendence of this literary Temple of Fame had been assigned to "a friend to the constitution in church and state." We should not then have had it too much crowded with obscure dissenting teachers, doubtless men of merit and worth, but not quite to be numbered amongst "the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland." (1)

(folio) of a new edition of the BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA, between the years 1778 and 1793. Dr. Kippis died, October 8. 1795; and the work is not likely to be soon completed. — M.

(1) In this censure, which has been carelessly uttered, I carelessly joined. But in justice to Dr. Kippis, who, with that manly, candid, good temper which marks his character, set me right, I now with pleasure retract it; and I desire it may be particularly observed, as pointed out by him to me, that "The new lives of dissenting divines, in the first four volumes of the second edition of the 'Biographia Britannica' are those of John Abernethy, Thomas Amory, George Benson, Hugh Broughton, the learned puritan, Simon Browne, Joseph Boyse, of Dublin, Thomas Cartwright, the learned puritan, and Samuel Chandler. The only doubt I have ever heard suggested is, whether there should have been an article of Dr. Amory. But I was convinced, and am still convinced, that he was entitled to one, from the reality of his learning, and the excellent and candid nature of his practical writings. — The new lives of clergymen of the Church of England, in the same four volumes, are as follows: John Balguy, Edward Bentham, George Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, William Berriman, Thomas Birch, William Borlase, Thomas Bott, James Bradley, Thomas Broughton, John Browne, John Burton, Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Thomas Carte, Edmund Castell, Edmund Chishull, Charles Churchill, William Clarke, Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, John Conybeare, Bishop of Bristol, George Castard, and Samuel Croxall. — 'I am not conscious,' says Dr. Kippis, 'of any partiality in conducting the work. I would not willingly insert a dissenting minister that does not justly deserve to be noticed, or omit an established clergyman that does. At the same time, I shall not be deterred from introducing dissent-

On Saturday, September 20; after breakfast, when Taylor was gone out to his farm, Dr. Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness; which he was, I always thought, erroneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like "great wit," may be "near allied to madness;" but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them. When he talked of madness, he was to be understood as speaking of those who were in any great degree disturbed, or, as it is commonly expressed, "troubled in mind." Some of the ancient philosophers held, that all deviations from right reason were madness; and whoever wishes to see the opinions both of ancients and moderns upon this subject, collected and illustrated with a a variety of curious facts, may read Dr. Arnold's very entertaining work. (1)

Johnson said, "A madman loves to be with people whom he fears; not as a dog fears the lash, but of whom he stands in awe." I was struck with the justice of this observation. To be with those of whom a person, whose mind is wavering and dejected, stands in awe, represses and composes an uneasy

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ers into the Biographia, when I am satisfied that they are entitled to that distinction, from their writings, learning, and merit.'" — Let me add that the expression "A friend to the constitution in church and state," was not meant by me as any reflection upon this reverend gentleman, as if he were an enemy to the political constitution of his country, as established at the Revolution, but, from my steady and avowed predilection for a *Tory*, was quoted from "Johnson's Dictionary," where that distinction is so defined.

(1) "Observations on Insanity," by Thomas Arnold, M.D. London, 1782.

tumult of spirits (1), and consoles him with the contemplation of something steady, and at least comparatively great.

He added, "Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper. They are eager for gratifications to sooth their minds, and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer; but when they grow very ill, pleasure is too weak for them, and they seek for pain. (2). Employment, Sir, and hardships, prevent melancholy. I suppose, in all our army in America, there was not one man who went mad."

We entered seriously upon a question of much importance to me, which Johnson was pleased to consider with friendly attention. I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great

(1) Cardan composed his mind tending to madness (or rather actually mad, for such he seems in his writings, learned as they are), by exciting voluntary pain. V. Card. Op. et. Vit. — KEARNEY.

(2) We read in the Gospels, that those unfortunate persons, who were possessed with evil spirits (which, after all, I think is the most probable cause of madness, as was first suggested to me by my respectable friend Sir John Pringle), had recourse to pain, tearing themselves, and jumping sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. Mr. Seward has furnished me with a remarkable anecdote in confirmation of Dr. Johnson's observation. A tradesman, who had acquired a large fortune in London, retired from business, and went to live at Worcester. His mind, being without its usual occupation, and having nothing else to supply its place, preyed upon itself, so that existence was a torment to him. At last he was seized with the stone; and a friend who found him in one of its severest fits, having expressed his concern, "No, no, Sir," said he, "don't pity me; what I now feel is ease, compared with that torture of mind from which it relieves me."

scene of ambition, instruction, and amusement; a scene which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I never knew any one who had such a *gust* for London as you have: and I cannot blame you for your wish to live there; yet, Sir, were I in your father's place, I should not consent to your settling there; for I have the old feudal notions, and I should be afraid that Auchinleck would be deserted, as you would soon find it more desirable to have a country seat in a better climate. I own, however, that to consider it as a *duty* to reside on a family estate is a prejudice; for we must consider, that working-people get employment equally, and the produce of land is sold equally, whether a great family resides at home or not; and if the rents of an estate be carried to London, they return again in the circulation of commerce; nay, Sir, we must perhaps allow, that carrying the rents to a distance is a good, because it contributes to that circulation. We must, however, allow, that a well-regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety; and so its residence at home may be of much advantage. But if a great family be disorderly and vicious, its residence at home is very pernicious to a neighbourhood. There is not now the same inducement to live in the country as formerly; the pleasures of social life are much better enjoyed in town, and there is no longer in the country that power and influence in proprietors of land which they had in old times, and which made the country so agree-

able to them. The Laird of Auchinleck now is not near so great a man as the Laird of Auchinleck was a hundred years ago."

I told him, that one of my ancestors never went from home without being attended by thirty men on horseback. Johnson's shrewdness and spirit of inquiry were exerted upon every occasion. "Pray," said he, "how did your ancestor support his thirty men and thirty horses when he went at a distance from home, in an age when there was hardly any money in circulation?" I suggested the same difficulty to a friend who mentioned Douglas's going to the Holy Land with a numerous train of followers. (1) Douglas could, no doubt, maintain followers enough while living upon his own lands, the produce of which supplied them with food; but he could not carry that food to the Holy Land; and as there was no commerce by which he could be supplied with money, how could he maintain them in foreign countries?

I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might go off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

(1) James de Duglas was requested by King Robert Bruce in his last hours to repair with his heart to Jerusalem, and humbly to deposit it at the sepulchre of our Lord; which (according to Boëce, whom Boswell seems to follow) he did in 1330; but other writers represent, probably more truly, that he was killed by the way, and that the heart was brought back and buried at Melrose. — *Hailes's Annals*, ii. 146—9. Hence the *crowned heart* in the arms of Douglas. — C.

To obviate his apprehension, that by settling in London I might desert the seat of my ancestors, I assured him that I had old feudal principles to a degree of enthusiasm; and that I felt all the *dulcedo* of the *natale solum*. I reminded him, that the Laird of Auchinleck had an elegant house, in front of which he could ride ten miles forward upon his own territories, upon which he had upwards of six hundred people attached to him; that the family seat was rich in natural romantic beauties of rock, wood, and water; and that in my "morn of life" I had appropriated the finest descriptions in the ancient classics to certain scenes there, which were thus associated in my mind. That when all this was considered, I should certainly pass a part of the year at home, and enjoy it the more from variety, and from bringing with me a share of the intellectual stores of the metropolis. He listened to all this, and kindly "hoped it might be as I now supposed."

He said, a country gentleman should bring his lady to visit London as soon as he can, that they may have agreeable topics for conversation when they are by themselves.

As I meditated trying my fortune in Westminster Hall, our conversation turned upon the profession of the law in England. JOHNSON. "You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice

so few. He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward; but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a lifetime in the courts, and never have an opportunity of showing his abilities." (1)

We talked of employment being absolutely necessary to preserve the mind from wearying and growing fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy; and I mentioned to him a saying which somebody had related of an American savage, who, when an European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question: "Will it purchase *occupation?*" JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, Sir, money *will* purchase occupation; it will purchase all the conveniencies of life: it will purchase variety of company; it will purchase all sorts of entertainment." (2)

I talked to him of Forster's "Voyage to the

(1) Now, at the distance of fifteen years since this conversation passed, the observation which I have had an opportunity of making in Westminster Hall has convinced me, that, however true the opinion of Dr. Johnson's legal friend may have been some time ago, the same certainty of success cannot now be promised to the same display of merit. The reasons, however, of the rapid rise of some, and the disappointment of others equally respectable, are such as it might seem invidious to mention, and would require a longer detail than would be proper for this work. — B. — Mr. Boswell's personal feelings here have clouded his perception, for Johnson's friend was far from holding out any thing like a *certainty* of success — nay, he seems to have scarcely allowed a probability. — C.

(2) Nay, it may be said to purchase, or rather to create, *occupation* too. No man can have riches without the trouble that, in different degrees, must accompany them. — C.

South Seas," which pleased me; but I found he did not like it. "Sir," said he, "there is a great affectation of fine writing in it." BOSWELL. "But he carries you along with him." JOHNSON. No, Sir; he does not carry *me* along with him; he leaves me behind him; or rather, indeed, he sets me before him; for he makes me turn over many leaves at a time."

On Sunday, September 21., we went to the church of Ashbourne, which is one of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size. I felt great satisfaction in considering that I was supported in my fondness for solemn public worship by the general concurrence and munificence of mankind.

Johnson and Taylor were so different from each other, that I wondered at their preserving an intimacy. Their having been at school and college together might, in some degree, account for this: but Sir Joshua Reynolds has furnished me with a stronger reason; for Johnson mentioned to him, that he had been told by Taylor he was to be his heir. I shall not take upon me to animadvert upon this; but certain it is that Johnson paid great attention to Taylor. He now, however, said to me, "Sir, I love him; but I do not love him more; my regard for him does not increase. As it is said in the Apocrypha, 'his talk is of bullocks.' (1) I do not suppose he is very fond of my company. His

(1) Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxviii. v. 25. The whole chapter may be read as an admirable illustration of the superiority of cultivated minds over the gross and illiterate.

habits are by no means sufficiently clerical: this he knows that I see; and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation."

I have no doubt that a good many sermons were composed for Taylor by Johnson. At this time I found upon his table a part of one which he had newly begun to write: and *Concio pro Tayloro* appears in one of his diaries. When to these circumstances we add the internal evidence from the power of thinking and style, in the collection which the Reverend Mr. Hayes had published, with the *significant* title of "Sermons *left for Publication*, by the Reverend John Taylor, LL.D.," our conviction will be complete. (1)

I, however, would not have it thought that Dr. Taylor, though he could not write like Johnson, (as, indeed, who could?) did not sometimes compose sermons as good as those which we generally have from very respectable divines. He showed me one with notes on the margin in Johnson's hand-writing; and I was present when he read another to Johnson, that he might have his opinion of it, and Johnson

(1) ["Before I release you, I must mention one more publication, on account of its singularity as well as its merit. It is a volume of sermons, published by Dr. Taylor, prebendary of Westminster, who is lately dead. He was an old friend and school-fellow of Dr. Johnson's, and was long suspected of preaching sermons written by the doctor. To confute this calumny, he ordered this volume of sermons to be published after his death. But I am afraid it will not quite answer his purpose; for I will venture to say, that there is not a man in England who knows any thing of Dr. Johnson's peculiarities of style, sentiment, and composition, that will not instantly pronounce these sermons to be his. Indeed, they are (some of them at least) in his very best manner; and Taylor was no more capable of writing them than of making an epic poem."—*Bp. Porteus to Dr. Beattie*, 1788.—MARKLAND.]

said it was "very well." These, we may be sure, were not Johnson's; for he was above little arts, or tricks of deception.

Johnson was by no means of opinion that every man of a learned profession should consider it as incumbent upon him, or as necessary to his credit, to appear as an author. When, in the ardour of ambition for literary fame, I regretted to him one day that an eminent judge (1) had nothing of it, and therefore would leave no perpetual monument of himself to posterity; "Alas! Sir," said Johnson, "what a mass of confusion should we have, if every bishop, and every judge, every lawyer, physician, and divine, were to write books!"

I mentioned to Johnson a respectable person of a very strong mind (2), who had little of that tenderness which is common to human nature; as an instance of which, when I suggested to him that he should invite his son, who had been settled ten years in foreign parts, to come home and pay him a visit, his answer was, "No, no, let him mind his business." JOHNSON. "I do not agree with him, Sir, in this. Getting money is not all a man's business: to cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life."

In the evening, Johnson, being in very good spirits, entertained us with several characteristical portraits: I regret that any of them escaped my retention and diligence. I found from experience,

(1) Probably Lord Mansfield. — C.

(2) He means his father, Lord Auchinleck; and the absent son was David, who spent so many years in Spain. — C.

that to collect my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavour, it was necessary to write it down without delay. To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits, or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh.

I shall present my readers with a series of what I gathered this evening from the Johnsonian garden.

"My friend, the late Earl of Corke, had a great desire to maintain the literary character of his family: he was a genteel man, but did not keep up the dignity of his rank. He was so generally civil, that nobody thanked him for it."

"Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole, as the phœnix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been *at me*: but I would do Jack a kindness, rather than not. The contest is now over."

"Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance: Foote makes you laugh more; but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company. He, indeed, well deserves his hire."

"Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birthday odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would not read his ode to an end. When we had done with criticism we walked over

to Richardson's, the author of 'Clarissa,' and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect*.' Now, Sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player* (1)!" (smiling disdainfully.) BOSWELL. "There, Sir, you are always heretical: you never will allow merit to a player." JOHNSON. "Merit, Sir! what merit? Do you respect a rope-dancer or a ballad-singer?" BOSWELL. "No, Sir; but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them gracefully." JOHNSON. "What! Sir, a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, '*I am Richard the Third*?' Nay, Sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings: there is both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites." BOSWELL. "My dear Sir! you may turn any thing into ridicule. I allow, that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing: but he who can represent exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers; and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable to do; his art is a very rare faculty. *Who*

(1) Perhaps Richardson's displeasure was created by Johnson's paying no respect to the *age* of Cibber, who was almost old enough to have been his grandfather. Cibber had left the stage, and ceased to be a player before Johnson left Oxford; so that he had no more reason to despise Cibber for that profession, than Cibber would have had to remind him of the days when he was usher at a school. — [Cibber quitted the stage in 1730, but appeared occasionally on it afterwards; particularly so late as 1744, as Pandulph in King John; so that Johnson might reasonably talk of him as being still a player.]

can repeat Hamlet's soliloquy, 'To be, or not to be,' as Garrick does it?" JOHNSON. "Any body may. Jemmy, there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room), will do as well in a week." BOSWELL. "No, no, Sir: and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds." JOHNSON. "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary."

This was most fallacious reasoning. I was *sure*, for once, that I had the best side of the argument. I boldly maintained the just distinction between a tragedian and a mere theatrical droll; between those who rouse our terror and pity, and those who only make us laugh. "If," said I, "Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON. "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, Sir, *quatenùs* Foote, has powers superior to them all." (1)

(1) The fact was, that Johnson could not see the passions as they rose and chased one another in the varied features of the expressive face of Garrick. Mr. Murphy remembered being in conversation with Johnson near the side of the scenes, during the tragedy of king Lear: when Garrick came off the stage, he said, "You two talk so loud, you destroy all my feelings."—"Prithee," replied Johnson, "do not talk of feelings; Punch has no feelings." — C.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

NOTE ON CIBBER'S "LIVES OF THE POETS."

[See *antè*, p. 149.]

In the Monthly Review for May, 1792, there is such a correction of the above passage as I should think myself very culpable not to subjoin. "This account is very inaccurate. The following statement of facts we know to be true, in every material circumstance:—Shiels was the principal collector and digester of the materials for the work; but, as he was very raw in authorship, an indifferent writer in prose, and his language full of Scotticisms [Theoph.], Cibber, who was a clever, lively fellow, and then soliciting employment among the booksellers, was engaged to correct the style and diction of the whole work, then intended to make only four volumes, with power to alter, expunge, or add, as he liked. He was also to supply *notes* occasionally, especially concerning those dramatic poets with whom he had been chiefly conversant. He also engaged to write several of the Lives; which (as we are told) he accordingly performed. He was farther useful in striking out the jacobitical and tory sentiments, which Shiels had industriously interspersed wherever he could bring them in; and as the success of the work appeared, after all, very doubtful, he was content with twenty-one pounds for his labour, besides a few sets of the books to disperse among his friends. Shiels had nearly seventy pounds, beside the advantage of many of the best Lives

in the work being communicated by friends to the undertaking; and for which Mr. Shiels had the same consideration as for the rest, being paid by the sheet for the whole. He was, however, so angry with his whiggish supervisor (THE., like his father, being a violent stickler for the political principles which prevailed in the reign of George the Second) for so unmercifully mutilating his copy, and scouting his politics, that he wrote Cibber a challenge; but was prevented from sending it by the publisher, who fairly laughed him out of his fury. The proprietors, too, were discontented in the end, on account of Mr. Cibber's unexpected industry; for his corrections and alterations in the proof-sheets were so numerous and considerable, that the printer made for them a grievous addition to his bill; and, in fine, all parties were dissatisfied. On the whole, the work was productive of no profit to the undertakers, who had agreed, in case of success, to make Cibber a present of some addition to the twenty guineas which he had received, and for which his receipt is now in the booksellers' hands. We are farther assured, that he actually obtained an additional sum; when he, soon after (in the year 1758), unfortunately embarked for Dublin, on an engagement for one of the theatres there; but the ship was cast away, and every person on board perished. There were about sixty passengers, among whom was the Earl of Drogheda, with many other persons of consequence and property.

"As to the alleged design of making the compilement pass for the work of old Mr. Cibber, the charges seem to have been founded on a somewhat uncharitable construction. We are assured that the thought was not harboured by some of the proprietors, who are still living; and we hope that it did not occur to the first designer of the work, who was also the printer of it, and who bore a respectable character.

"We have been induced to enter circumstantially into the foregoing detail of facts relating to the Lives of the Poets, compiled by Messrs. Cibber and Shiels, from a sincere regard to that sacred principle of truth, to which Dr. Johnson so rigidly adhered, according to the best of his knowledge; and

which, we believe, *no consideration* would have prevailed on him to violate. In regard to the matter which we now dismiss, he had, no doubt, been misled by partial and wrong information: Shiels was the doctor's amanuensis; he had quarrelled with Cibber; it is natural to suppose that he told his story in his own way; and it is certain that *he* was not 'a very sturdy moralist.'"

This explanation appears to me satisfactory. It is, however, to be observed, that the story told by Johnson does not rest solely upon my record of his conversation; for he himself has published it in his Life of Hammond, where he says, "the manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession." Very probably he had trusted to Shiels's word, and never looked at it so as to compare it with "The Lives of the Poets," as published under Mr. Cibber's name. What became of that manuscript I know not. I should have liked much to examine it. I suppose it was thrown into the fire in that impetuous combustion of papers, which Johnson I think rashly executed when *moribundus*. — Boswell. (1)

(1) With more immediate reference to the statement in the text (p. 149.), I must observe, that, notwithstanding the weight which must be given to Dr. Johnson's *repeated assertions* on a subject in which he alleged that he had indisputable evidence in his own possession, yet there are some circumstances which seem at variance with his statements. It is true that the title-page of the first volume says, "*compiled* by Mr Cibber," but all the other volumes have "compiled by Mr. Cibber and *other hands*;" so that Johnson was certainly mistaken in representing that Cibber was held out as the *sole author*. In the third vol., p. 156, the life of Betterton, the actor, is announced as "written by R. S.," no doubt *Robert Shiels*, and to it is appended the following note: "As *Mr. Theophilus Cibber* is publishing (in another work) the 'Lives and Character of eminent Actors,' he leaves to *other gentlemen concerned in this work* the account of some *players*, who could not be omitted herein as *poets*." A similar notice accompanies the Life of Booth, vol. iv. p. 178.; and again, in a note on the "Life of Thomson," vol. v. p. 211., *Theophilus Cibber, in his own name*, states, that he read the tragedy of Agamemnon to the theatrical synod with so much applause, that he was selected to play the part of Melisander. These circumstances prove that "a *Cibber*" had some share in the work; — that there was no intention to conceal that it was *Theophilus*; and that *Robert Shiels and others* were *avowed* assistants. Mr. Boswell, in a former passage, (see *antè*, Vol. I. p. 216.), intimated, that "some *choice passages* of these lives were

No. II.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF MR. JAMES THOMPSON, MINISTER OF DUMFERMLINE.

[See *antè*, p. 182.]

"Of the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the act itself, and the particular circumstances with which it is invested.

"The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is intrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd tending not his own sheep but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain.

"As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach, if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

"As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke, and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of

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written by Johnson himself." That opinion I thought that Johnson's own assertion sufficiently negatived; but I must admit, on reconsideration, that there is some colour for Mr. Foswell's suspicion; for it appears that Johnson was at one time employed to contribute to that work the lives of, at least, Shakspeare and Dryden (see *antè*, Vol. II. p. 299., and *post*, 15th May, 1776); and though he certainly did not write those lives, yet several passages throughout the work are much in his style. That, however, might arise from the imitation of Shiels; but what is most important is, that the *plan* in which these lives are written is substantially the same as that which Johnson adopted in his own beautiful work. — C.

any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn.

"If we enquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of sinners was public censure and open penance; penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the church had yet no help from the civil power, while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of persecution, and when governors were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority.

"That the church, therefore, had once a power of public censure, is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority, is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

"The hour came, at length, when, after three hundred years of struggle and distress, Truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrate from that time cooperated with the priest, and clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the state, when it came to the assistance of the church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures which were lawful before, were lawful still. But they had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow Christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

"It therefore appears, from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by public censure has been always

considered as inherent in the church; and that this right was not conferred by the civil power; for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the Christian magistrate interposed his office, not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was insufficient; and, when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

"It is not improbable, that from this acknowledged power of public censure grew, in time, the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of public reprehension were willing to submit themselves to the priest by a private accusation of themselves, and to obtain a reconciliation with the church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would, in times of ignorance and corruption, easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconcilement.

"From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, to torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controlled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though he may not pry; he may yet hear, though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him it is still his duty to use, for the benefit of his flock. A father who lives near a wicked neighbour may forbid a son to frequent his company. A minister who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them one by one in friendly converse, or by a parochial visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them altogether? Of that which is to be made known to all,

how is there any difference whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all must necessarily be public. Whether it shall be public at once, or public by degrees, is the only question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper and the warning more effectual.

"It may easily be urged, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish at will the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent, and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence; he may be rash, and judge without examination; he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too much harshness; he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment under the shelter of his pastoral character.

"Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise, not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted; yet courts of law must judge, though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgment, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

"If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust; we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable; so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publicly known throughout the parish; and, on occasion of a public election,

warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which public elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by one of his parishioners as pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing, as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a public paper, with scandal, defamation, and falsehood. The minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal, but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and, with all the fortitude of injured honesty, he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and from danger. The man whom he accuses pretends not to be innocent, or, at least, only pretends, for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to public happiness. To warn the people, therefore, against it was not wanton and officious, but necessary and pastoral.

"What, then, is the fault with which this worthy minister is charged? He has usurped no dominion over conscience. He has exerted no authority in support of doubtful and controverted opinions. He has not dragged into light a bashful and corrigible sinner. His censure was directed against a breach of morality, against an act which no man justifies. The man who appropriated this censure to himself is evidently and notoriously guilty. His consciousness of his own wickedness incited him to attack his faithful reprover with open insolence and printed accusations. Such an attack made defence necessary; and we hope it will be at last decided that the means of defence were just and lawful."

No III.

NOTE ON WILKES'S INTERPRETATION OF HORACE'S "DIFFICILE EST PROPRIÈ," ETC.

[See *ante* p 196]

My very pleasant friend himself as well as others who remember old stories, will no doubt be surprised when I observe, that John Wilkes here shows himself to be of the *Warburtonian school* It is nevertheless true as appears from Dr Hurd the bishop of Worcester's very elegant commentary and notes on the 'Epistola ad Pisones' It is necessary, to a fair consideration of the question, that the whole passage in which the words occur should be kept in view —

> "Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis et audes
> Personam formare novam servetur ad imum
> Qualis ab incepto processerit et sibi constet
> Difficile est propriè communia dicere tuque
> Rectiùs Iliacum carmen deducis in actus
> Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus
> Publica materies privati juris erit si
> Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem
> Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
> Interpres nec desilies imitator in arctum
> Unde pedem proferre pudor vetat aut operis lex"

The "Commentary" thus illustrates it — "But the formation of quite new characters is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here there is no generally received and fixed archetype to work after, but every one judges of common right according to the extent and comprehension of his own idea, therefore he advises to labour and refit old characters and subjects, particularly those made known and authorized by the practice of Homer and the epic writers" The note is, "*Difficile est proprie communia dicere*" Lambin's comment is, "Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata et ita, quæ cuivis exposita sunt et in medio quodam-

modo posita, quasi vacua et a nemine occupata." And that this is the true meaning of *communia* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it; so that the sense given it in the commentary is unquestionably the right one. Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critic has this strange passage: "Difficile quidem esse propriè communia dicere, hoc est, materiem vulgarem, notam et è medio petitam, ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et scriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi procul dubio ponderis ista est observatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habitâ, major videtur esse gloria fabulam formare penitùs novam, quàm veterem, utcunque mutatum de novo exhibere." — *Poet. Præl.* v. ii. p. 164. Where, having first put a wrong construction on the word *communia*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticism. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting old subjects to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superior difficulty of the latter, from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters: and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers. For my own part (with all deference for Dr. Hurd, who thinks the case clear), I consider the passage, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*," to be a *crux* for the critics on Horace. The explication which my Lord of Worcester treats with so much contempt is, nevertheless, countenanced by authority which I find quoted by the learned Baxter, in his edition of Horace, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*, h. e. res vulgares disertis verbis enarrare, vel humile thema cum dignitate tractare. *Difficile est communes res propriis explicare verbis.* Vet. Schol." I was much disappointed to find that the great critic, Dr. Bentley, has no note upon this very difficult passage, as from his vigorous and illuminated mind I should have expected to receive more satisfaction than I have yet had. Sanadon thus treats of it: "Propriè communia dicere; c'est à dire, qu'il n'est pas aisé de former à ces

personnages d'imagination des caractères particuliers et cependant vraisemblables. Comme l'on a été le maître de les former tels qu'on a voulu, les fautes que l'on fait en cela sont moins pardonnables. C'est pourquoi Horace conseille de prendre toujours des sujets connus, tels que sont, par exemple, ceux que l'on peut tirer des poèmes d'Homère." And Dacier observes upon it, "Après avoir marqué les deux qualités qu'il faut donner aux personnages qu'on invente, il conseille aux poëtes tragiques, de n'user pas trop facilement de cette liberté qu'ils ont d'en inventer: car il est très-difficile de réussir dans ces nouveaux caractères. Il est mal aisé, dit Horace, de traiter proprement, c'est à dire, convenablement, des sujets communs; c'est à dire, des sujets inventés, et qui n'ont aucun fondement ni dans l'histoire ni dans la fable; et il les appelle communs, parcequ'ils sont en disposition à tout le monde, et que tout le monde a le droit de les inventer, et qu'ils sont, comme on dit, au premier occupant." See his observations at large on this expression and the following. After all, I cannot help entertaining some doubt whether the words *Difficile est propriè communia dicere* may not have been thrown in by Horace to form a separate article in a "choice of difficulties" which a poet has to encounter who chooses a new subject; in which case it must be uncertain which of the various explanations is the true one, and every reader has a right to decide as it may strike his own fancy. And even should the words be understood, as they generally are, to be connected both with what goes before and what comes after, the exact sense cannot be absolutely ascertained; for instance, whether *propriè* is meant to signify *in an appropriated manner*, as Dr. Johnson here understands it, or, as it is often used by Cicero, *with propriety* or *elegantly*. In short, it is a rare instance of a defect in perspicuity in an admirable writer, who, with almost every species of excellence, is peculiarly remarkable for that quality. The length of this note, perhaps, requires an apology. Many of my readers, I doubt not, will admit that a critical discussion of a passage in a favourite classic is very engaging.—BOSWELL.

This passage was the subject of an ingenious discussion be-

tween the young Marquis de Sevigné and M. Dacier, which will be found, together with Sanadon's and Dumarsais' opinions, in the last volume of the best edition of Madame de Sevigné's letters. It seems to result from the whole discussion that, in the ordinary meaning of the words, the passage is obscure, and that, to make sense, we must either alter the words, or assign to them an unusual interpretation. All commentators are agreed — by the help of the context — what the general meaning must be, but no one seems able *verbum verbo reddere fidus interpres.* — C.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.